



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

Parks & Recreation Department

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 8, 2016

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

Cc: Josh Durand, Parks Superintendent

From: Steve Rafuse, Park Planner

Project: PRC 16-24: University Lake Park Master Plan

INTRODUCTION

University Lake Park is a Community Use Park and Natural Area located in the rapidly developing University-Medical District (UMED) of Anchorage. The park encompasses 64 acres and features forested trails and open space as well as access to University Lake and Chester Creek. The park includes a popular off-leash dog walking loop, a major non-motorized multi-use trail corridor, and features outstanding views of the Chugach Mountains.

University Lake Park has evolved to become one of the most popular parks in Anchorage. The popularity of the park and diversity of users has created maintenance and management challenges for the Parks and Recreation Department. These challenges range from shoreline erosion to park users using neighboring properties for parking and recreation. One particular concern is the increasing conflicts between humans/dogs and wildlife.

The University Lake Park Master Plan provides a framework for the future management, maintenance and development of the park. The plan seeks to address issues and concerns, and provides recommendations to balance public access and recreation with environmental health to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park.

BACKGROUND

University Lake Park as it exists today is largely the result of historic development in the UMED area. Throughout the 1960's, the site was used in the extraction of gravel to support the development of surrounding institutions and residential properties. In the 1980's, Chester Creek was re-routed through the gravel pit to create Behm Lake, now known as University Lake. Shortly after, the Municipality of Anchorage acquired the site in a land trade with the Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) for public park and recreational purposes. In the years that followed, a group called the "Friends of University Lake" was formed to help restore and enhance the site as a "Native Plant and Animal Reserve".

In 2003, the Anchorage Assembly designated University Lake Park as one of six "off-leash dog park spaces" in the Anchorage Bowl. The introduction of off-leash dogs fundamentally changed the character of University Lake Park from a quiet contemplative natural area to a more active and popular recreation destination.

While some in the community prefer the park as it was prior to 2003, the park has evolved to become one of the most popular off-leash dog park spaces in Anchorage. For many of the same reasons, park users today value University Lake Park for its natural beauty and convenient access to recreation.

The popularity of University Lake Park has had both positive and negative impacts on the park. Increased foot traffic has created a vibrant and fun environment at the park in which individuals feel safer than in other more remote or lesser used parks. While this is generally considered a positive, increased foot traffic has had negative impacts on the natural environment as individuals and dogs have trampled shoreline vegetation causing erosion and leading to concerns over water quality.

PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement in park planning is essential to ensuring that the management and development of University Lake Park is consistent with the desires of the community. The public involvement process was led by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department with support from local planning and design firms Stantec and Earthscape. The planning team facilitated a public involvement process that included outreach, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and meetings with an advisory group.

Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholders were interviewed early in the planning process as a means to gather information and identify issues that should be addressed in the master plan. Interviews were conducted with representatives from neighboring institutions, user groups, natural resource managers, and community members.

Advisory Group Meetings

The planning team worked with an advisory group throughout the development of the master plan to ensure that recommendations identified in the master plan align with the desires of the community. The advisory group was comprised of diverse stakeholders each representing a different interest or institution.

Advisory group members were tasked with providing insight, information, recommendations and feedback to help guide the development of the master plan. As the planning team gathered information through site analysis and public meetings, it was presented to the advisory group for deliberation and discussion. Issues and points of contention were resolved and general consensus was achieved for a preferred alternative master plan.

Public Meetings

The planning team hosted two public meetings to gather input, identify issues, and solicit feedback from the public. Both meetings were well attended with close to 100 people attending the first meeting and 40 people attending the second meeting. Members of the public who attended the meetings represented a wide range of perspectives and interests. Many of those in attendance were dog owners and vocal supporters of University Lake Park as an off-leash area.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder participation throughout the process ensured that the future management and development of the park is compatible with institutional growth while continuing to provide active and healthy recreation to the public. The following organizations participated on the University Lake Park Master Plan advisory group.

- Alaska Fish and Game
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Pacific University
- Anchorage Unleashed
- Anchorage Waterways Council
- Animal Control Advisory Board
- Friends of University Lake
- MOA Watershed Management
- MOA Parks and Recreation
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University Area Community Council
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Information gathered during the public meetings was reported back to the advisory group for discussion. Several members of the advisory group participated in the public meetings, providing additional resources and information, and were available to answer questions and record public input.

THE MASTER PLAN

The University Lake Park Master Plan provides a vision for the management, maintenance, and development of the park over the next ten years. During the planning process, several issues and concerns were identified. The University Lake Park Master Plan recognizes those issues and concerns and provides recommendations to address and improve existing conditions. Recommendations are based on best practices and public preferences for the development and management of the park.

The planning process revealed a number of themes in which there was general agreement among members of the public. Participants in the public meetings valued the natural setting and the trails for quiet recreation. There was also general agreement among members of the public regarding a number of the qualities that make University Lake a community gem, and the challenges to be addressed in this master plan:

Common Themes/General Agreement Items

- University Lake Park is a valued natural area in a rapidly urbanizing area
- The park is being “loved to death”
- Water quality and habitat restoration need to be addressed
- The numerous different recreation interests often experience conflicts
- Signage, boundaries and wayfinding are unclear and need to be improved
- Most park users are responsible, although not all
- Parking does not meet current demand and needs to be addressed
- Better management, maintenance, and enforcement is needed

Recommendations

The University Lake Park Master Plan largely maintains the park much as it exists today with improvements to existing facilities. The Master Plan identifies desired future conditions which are organized by topic into the six categories. Each category includes a series of strategies.

1. Retain the Natural Character

The planning process revealed that the public enjoys University Lake Park much as it is today. Members of the public voiced a strong preference for retaining the natural character of the park. When asked if future development of the park should incorporate more urban elements (i.e. hardscaped plazas, paved sidewalks, etc.) to better align with the increased urbanization of the growing UMED District, the public was clear that the park should remain rustic, natural, and minimally developed. Further, members of the public cited the increased pressure from urbanization as an important factor in the need to maintain University Lake Park as a natural area.

2. Water Quality, Wildlife, and Natural Resource Management

The popularity of University Lake Park has impacted natural resources including water quality and wildlife. Erosion and shoreline degradation are common in high-use areas of the park, particularly at access points to the lake and creek. While maintaining some access to the lake was desired, members of the public

support restoration and re-vegetation of degraded areas. Members of the public also support the need to balance public use with the preservation of greenspace and wildlife habitat. This master plan recommends several natural resource management strategies to improve water quality, protect flora and fauna, and continue public use for years to come.

3. Trails to Support a Variety of Uses

The diversity of trail types and trail experiences at University Lake Park make the park a citywide destination. Preserving the balance of paved multi-use trails and soft-surface trails including the off-leash loop, is highly desired by members of the public. The trail system, as it exists, is to be maintained with improvements to ensure a safe and firm walking surface. The master plan recommends a re-alignment of the multi-use trail to south of the parking lot to provide adequate separation and eliminate conflicts between off-leash dogs and bicyclists near the main kiosk. Trail re-alignment should coincide with the future reconfiguration and expansion of the parking lot to the east.

4. Improve Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding at University Lake Park is not well defined and is unclear, often leaving visitors confused and leading to conflicts between user groups. Upgrading signage and wayfinding will be important to the future success of the park as a recreation area for all. Signage is to be improved, as is wayfinding, and critical areas such as bird nesting and beaver lodges should be protected by providing regulatory signage and interpretive information. The master plan recommends a hierarchy of gateways, nodes, and wayfinding signage to clearly define trail types and use areas.

5. Parking to Meet Demand

Parking has been an issue at University Lake Park for many years. Limited available parking on site has resulted in park users parking on neighboring private property. Public preferences for expanding the existing parking lot off Elmore Road was considered and deliberated by the advisory group. This master plan recommends that parking be expanded to provide a total of 50 spaces. The master plan also recommends that parking be moved to the east in conjunction with the re-alignment of the multi-use trail.

6. Maintenance and Amenities

Regular maintenance combined with the installation of new amenities make for a clean, comfortable, and enjoyable park experience. This master plan recommends regular trash pick-up, the provision of restrooms, and the installation of new amenities to improve the health and appearance of University Lake Park. New amenities such as trash cans, benches, mutt mitts, kiosks, signage, wayfinding and interpretive panels should be provided at appropriate locations within the park.

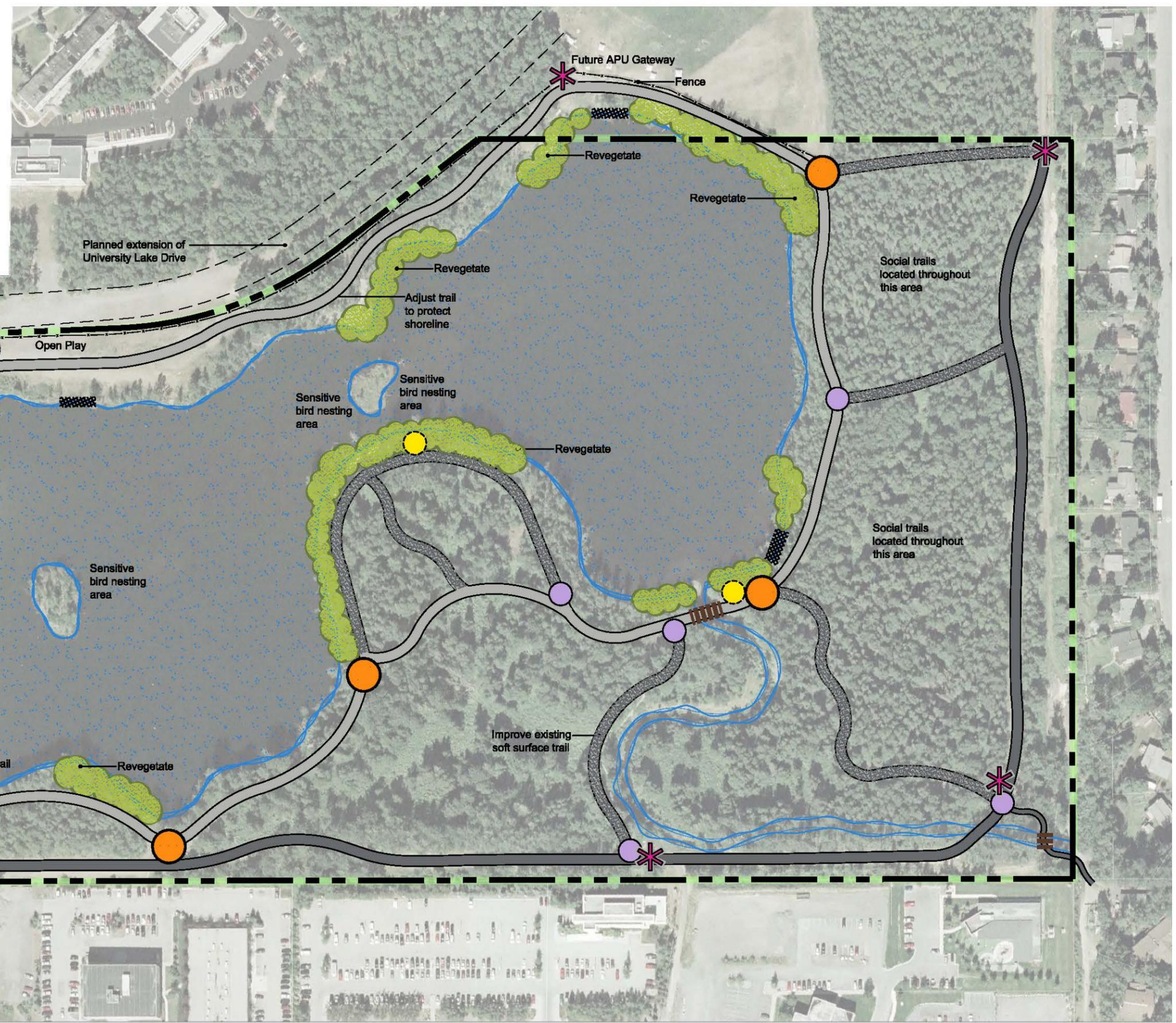
STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of the University Lake Park Master Plan. The Master Plan is the product of a public involvement process which included outreach and presentations at the University Area Community Council, two public planning workshops, and advisory group meetings with diverse stakeholders representing major institutions, professional land and wildlife managers, and user groups.

While there is a wide range of opinions regarding the management and development of University Lake Park, the University Lake Park Master Plan identifies and addresses issues and concerns and attempts to balance the interest of all stakeholders and user groups. The Department recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution in support of the University Lake Park Master Plan.

Legend

-  Node-Trash/Seating/Mutt Mitt/Map/Wayfinding
-  Restrooms/Port-A-Potty
-  Interpretive Material
-  Wayfinding
-  Gateway-Park ID Structure/Safety Fence/Rules/Regs/Park Map/Wayfinding
-  Water Entry
-  Bridge
-  Paved-On Leash
-  Soft Surface (off leash)
-  Soft Surface (on leash)



University Lake Park





Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska
Parks & Recreation Commission

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PRC RES NO. 2016-20
UNIVERSITY LAKE PARK MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, the development of a University Lake Park Master Plan is identified as a priority for implementation in the 2015 UMED District Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, the University Lake Park Master Plan is intended to address issues and concerns and provides a 10 year vision to guide the management, maintenance and development of University Lake Park; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department facilitated an extensive public involvement process including outreach to over ten community councils, presentations at the University Area Community Council, two public workshops and three meetings with an advisory group; and

WHEREAS, the advisory group was formed to assist the Department in identifying and prioritizing management, maintenance and development priorities for University Lake Park and was comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders including representatives from major UMED institutions; federal, state and local natural resource and wildlife managers; representatives from user groups, members of the University Area Community Council, and area residents; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations proposed in the University Lake Park Master Plan attempt to balance the diverse wants and needs of all park users and are based on community and stakeholder preferences for desired future conditions, are informed by best practices, have been vetted by the advisory group, and have received a resolution from the University Area Community Council; and

WHEREAS, the recommendations proposed in the University Lake Park Master Plan provide strategies to retain the natural character of the park; improve water quality, wildlife and natural resource management; provide trails to support a variety of uses including an off-leash trail, improving signage and wayfinding, providing parking that meets demand, and upgrading maintenance and amenities to support park use; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the Master Plan submitted by the Department and the advisory group for University Lake Park.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 8th day of September, 2016.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

John Rodda, Director
Parks & Recreation Department



University Lake Park MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT

A MASTER PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY LAKE PARK

AUGUST 2016



Acknowledgments

Anchorage Parks and Recreation would like to thank the following individuals for their hard work and support on this project.

University Lake Park Advisory Group

David Battle	Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Management
Hannah Davis	University Area Community Council
Kayla Epstein	Anchorage Unleashed
Mark Fitch	Bike Commuter
Ben Hahn	Alaska Pacific University
Lonnie Mansell	University of Alaska, Anchorage
Kimberly Olmsted	Park Neighbor
Bob Shipley	Anchorage Waterways Council
Jim Sipman	Friends of University Lake / Park Founder
Ryan Toohey	Park Neighbor
Michelle Weston	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Jeff Urbanus	Municipality of Anchorage, Watershed Management
Tamara Zeller	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird Management
Steve Zemke	University Area Community Council

Planning Team

Dwayne Adams	Earthscape LLC
Matt McMillan	Stantec
Steve Rafuse	MOA Parks and Recreation, Project Manager
Sara Wilson Doyle	Stantec



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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

University Lake Park is a Community Use Park and Natural Area located in the rapidly developing University-Medical District (UMED) of Anchorage. The park encompasses 64 acres and features forested trails and open space as well as access to University Lake and Chester Creek. The park includes a popular off-leash dog walking loop, a major non-motorized multi-use trail corridor, and features outstanding views of the Chugach Mountains.

University Lake Park has evolved to become one of the most popular parks in Anchorage. The popularity of the park and diversity of users has created maintenance and management challenges for the Parks and Recreation Department. These challenges range from shoreline erosion to park users using neighboring properties for parking and recreation. One particular concern is the increasing conflicts between humans/dogs and wildlife.

The University Lake Park Master Plan provides a framework for the future management, maintenance and development of the park. The plan seeks to address issues and concerns, and provides recommendations to balance public access and recreation with environmental health to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park.

Background

University Lake Park as it exists today is largely the result of historic development in the UMED area. Throughout the 1960's, the site was used in the extraction of gravel to support the development of surrounding institutions and residential properties. In the 1980's, Chester Creek was re-routed through the gravel pit to create Behm Lake, now known as University Lake. Shortly after, the Municipality of Anchorage acquired the site in a land trade with the Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) for public park and recreational purposes. In the years that followed, a group called the "Friends of University Lake" was formed to help restore and enhance the site as a "Native Plant and Animal Reserve".



Figure 1: Context map of Anchorage, the UMED District and University Lake Park

In 2003, the Anchorage Assembly designated University Lake Park as one of six “off-leash dog park spaces” in the Anchorage Bowl. The introduction of off-leash dogs fundamentally changed the character of University Lake Park from a quiet contemplative natural area to a more active and popular recreation destination.

While some in the community prefer the park as it was prior to 2003, the park has evolved to become one of the most popular off-leash dog park spaces in Anchorage. For many of the same reasons, park users today value University Lake Park for its natural beauty and convenient access to recreation.

The popularity of University Lake Park has had both positive and negative impacts on the park. Increased foot traffic has created a vibrant and fun environment at the park

in which individuals feel safer than in other more remote or lesser used parks. While this is generally considered a positive, increased foot traffic has had negative impacts on the

natural environment as individuals and dogs have trampled shoreline vegetation causing erosion and leading to concerns over water quality.



Ownership and Land Use

University Lake Park is owned by the Municipality of Anchorage and is managed by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Status: Dedicated

Address: 3865 Elmore Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Size: 64.16 Acres (6.4 acres Community Use Park, 57.6 Acres Natural Resource Area)

Parcel ID: 005-131-02-000, University Lake Subdivision Tract A

Grid: SW1736

Zoning: PLI

Project Purpose

The University Lake Park Master Plan provides a guiding vision for the future management, maintenance and development of University Lake Park by aiming to balance recreational uses with environmental health.

This document is intended to provide for the diverse needs of the many user groups, and addresses some of the park's unique challenges. This master plan identifies current and future needs, addresses issues and concerns, and establishes a framework for future development, management and maintenance consistent with a 10-year vision for the park.

Figure 2: Historic development in the UMED District and University Lake Park from 1960-present



General Themes and Issues Addressed in this Master Plan

The University Lake Park Master Plan seeks to address a number of issues and resolve conflicts between user groups active in the park today. Through the planning process, stakeholders and members of the public provided feedback on a variety of topics ranging from off-leash dogs and wildlife to parking, recreation and natural resources. This input was used to identify key issues and general themes. The following “general themes” provide a summary of the challenges and issues addressed in this Master Plan.

University Lake Park is a valued natural area in a rapidly urbanizing area

The UMED District is rapidly growing. Universities and medical institutions have in place master plans which identify expansion and development. As institutions expand, once abundant greenspace will disappear. In this context, park users recognize University Lake Park as a valued natural area and wish to preserve the natural character of the park.



Water quality and habitat restoration need to be addressed

Chester Creek and University Lake are impaired by elevated counts of fecal coliform. While much of this can be attributed to land uses upstream of the park, many individuals are concerned about off-leash dog activity contributing to the problem. Habitat restoration and the protection of riparian areas combined with waste cleanup can help improve water quality.



The park is being “loved to death”

University Lake Park may be a victim of its own success. The qualities that draw numbers of people to the park, such as the chance to view wildlife or recreate in University Lake, are being threatened by overuse. Balancing public access to recreation and the preservation of the natural environment will be critical to the long-term sustainability of the park. This challenge will only become more difficult as park visitation increases in the future.



The numerous different recreation interests often experience conflicts

University Lake Park is many things to many people - dog walkers, bike commuters, UMED students and employees, neighbors, and wildlife enthusiasts all enjoy the park. Identifying the many different recreational interests and addressing the conflicts that arise between uses will help make for a more successful public space.



Signage, boundaries and wayfinding are unclear and need to be improved

Many of the issues at University Lake Park could be addressed through a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan. The current signage at the park is disorganized and confusing. Off-leash trails are not clearly delineated. Interpretive information in sensitive wildlife areas is non-existent. And park users are using neighboring institutional property as public parkland.



Parking does not meet current demand and needs to be addressed

Parking has long been an issue at University Lake Park. Limited developed parking at the park has led visitors to park on neighboring properties. This has been a point of contention as neighboring institutions have been forced to step up enforcement and towing. The popularity of the park as a citywide destination requires that parking be developed to meet demand.



Most park users are responsible... although not all

Most park visitors are good stewards. However, there are always a few individuals who choose to disregard the rules. This negatively impacts the health of the park and detracts from others experience. Examples include: not picking up dog waste, erosion caused by not staying on established trails, dogs/people harassing wildlife, ANHC employees using the park as a “de facto smoking area” and park users parking and recreating on neighboring private property.

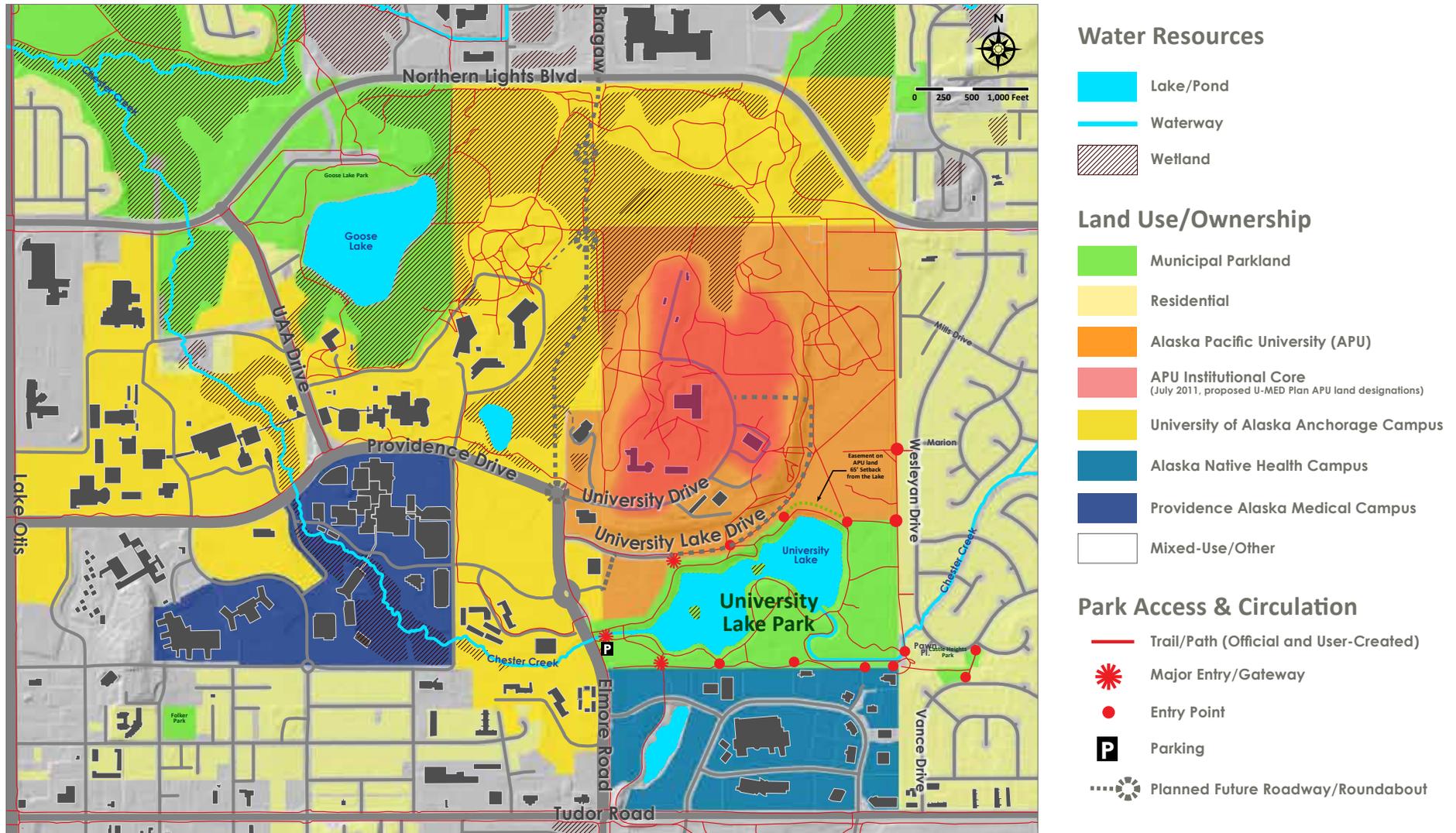


Better management, maintenance, and enforcement is needed

The popularity of University Lake Park demands a certain level of management, maintenance and enforcement to ensure that the park functions as intended. Additional resources will be needed in the future to meet community expectations for levels of service.



Figure 3: Map of University Lake Park and surrounding UMED land use



University Lake Park is surrounded by major medical and educational institutions to the north, south and west with residential development to the east. The Alaska Native Health Campus (ANHC) is located south of the park and includes the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), and the Southcentral Foundation. The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) student housing is located directly west of the park and Elmore Rd. Alaska Pacific University (APU) endowment property is located north of the park.

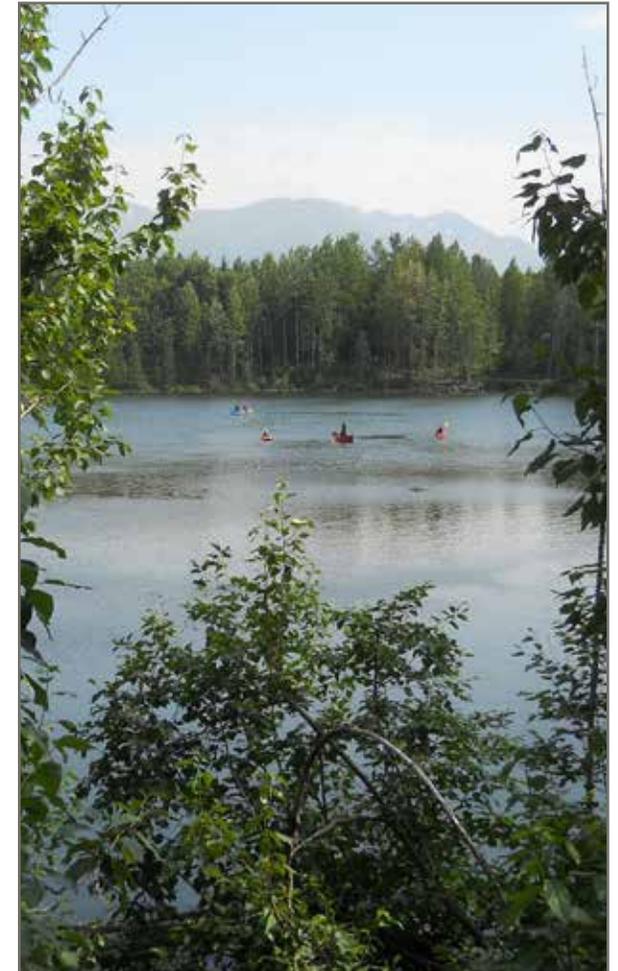
Guiding Principles

Parks and recreation are essential to the public health, welfare and safety of our community. The mission of the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department is to ensure that Anchorage parks are well maintained and safe for the public. This mission is embodied in the motto “Healthy Parks, Healthy People”. To fulfill this mission, Anchorage Parks and Recreation is guided by a set of eight strategies or core values. These strategies guide the Parks and Recreation Department in the management of Municipal parkland and were established in the *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan (2006)*.

Core Values & Strategic Goals

1. Improve Maintenance and Stewardship of What We Have
2. Private-Public Partnership
3. Parks as Community Building Blocks
4. Parks as Economic Engines
5. Balanced Services & Facilities for a Diverse Community
6. Access and Connections
7. Stewardship of Natural Resources
8. Creating a Strong Parks and Recreation Organization

These eight strategies serve as the basis for future action and decision-making and are the product of a comprehensive and on-going public engagement process.



CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing Conditions

This chapter describes the existing physical features and site conditions at University Lake Park. Information provided in this chapter is based on current and historic data, field observations and stakeholder input. The existing conditions are organized by topic area and include the following categories and descriptions:

Physical Environment

This section provides a general overview of the physical features and existing conditions at University Lake Park including: Context, Vegetation, Soils, Topography, Waterways, Stormwater, and Utilities.

Access and Circulation

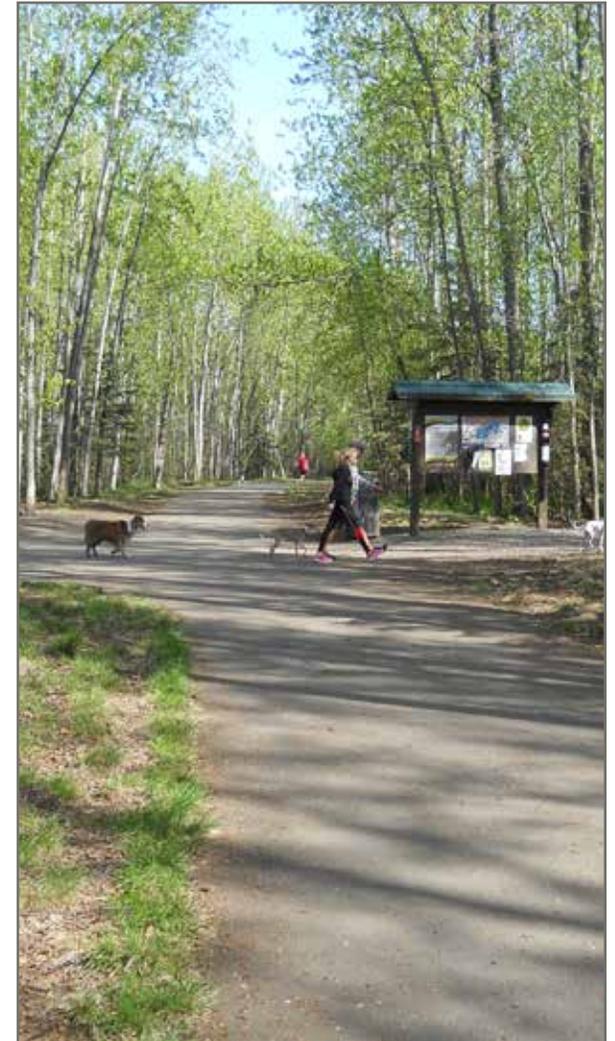
This section describes how visitors arrive at the park. It describes access, connections and circulation in and around the park including: Local Roadways, Vehicle Access and Parking, Bike and Pedestrian Access, and Transit.

Developed Facilities

This section describes the type and condition of developed facilities at University Lake Park including: Site Amenities, a Parking Lot, Signage and Wayfinding, Trails, Bridges, Open Space, and Water Access.

Wildlife and Natural Resources

This section outlines wildlife and natural resource considerations important to the master planning effort and includes discussions on: Wildlife, Shoreline and Streambank Erosion, and Water Quality.



Physical Environment

The physical environment of University Lake Park has long been tied to development in the surrounding UMED District. The site of University Lake was originally a gravel pit used for the development of neighboring institutions and residential areas. Around 1980, Chester Creek was re-routed through the old gravel pit creating Behm Lake, now known as University Lake. Since then, the park has experienced limited development and has remained largely a natural area.

Context

University Lake Park is approximately 64 acres of which 22 acres is occupied by University Lake. The lake is divided in the middle by a peninsula and small channel forming an eastern and western side of the lake. The lake is bound by moderate to steep banks with Chester Creek flowing into the lake at the southeastern corner and out of the lake at the far western boundary. The remainder of the park consists of upland forest with a small open space area located north of the lake, directly east of where University Lake Drive currently ends.

The park is bordered by the Alaska Native Health Campus (ANHC) to the south, Elmore Road and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to the west, Alaska Pacific University (APU) to the north, and the College Gate neighborhood to the east.

Vegetation

Vegetation is a mix of native and successional forest with dense understory and riparian vegetation. At the lake's edge, vegetation is comprised of alder and some willow and is immediately succeeded by cottonwood in most locations. East and south of the lake, the forest is primarily a mix of mature birch and spruce. The western end of the park is populated by cottonwood trees which have vegetated those areas that were previously disturbed during gravel extraction.

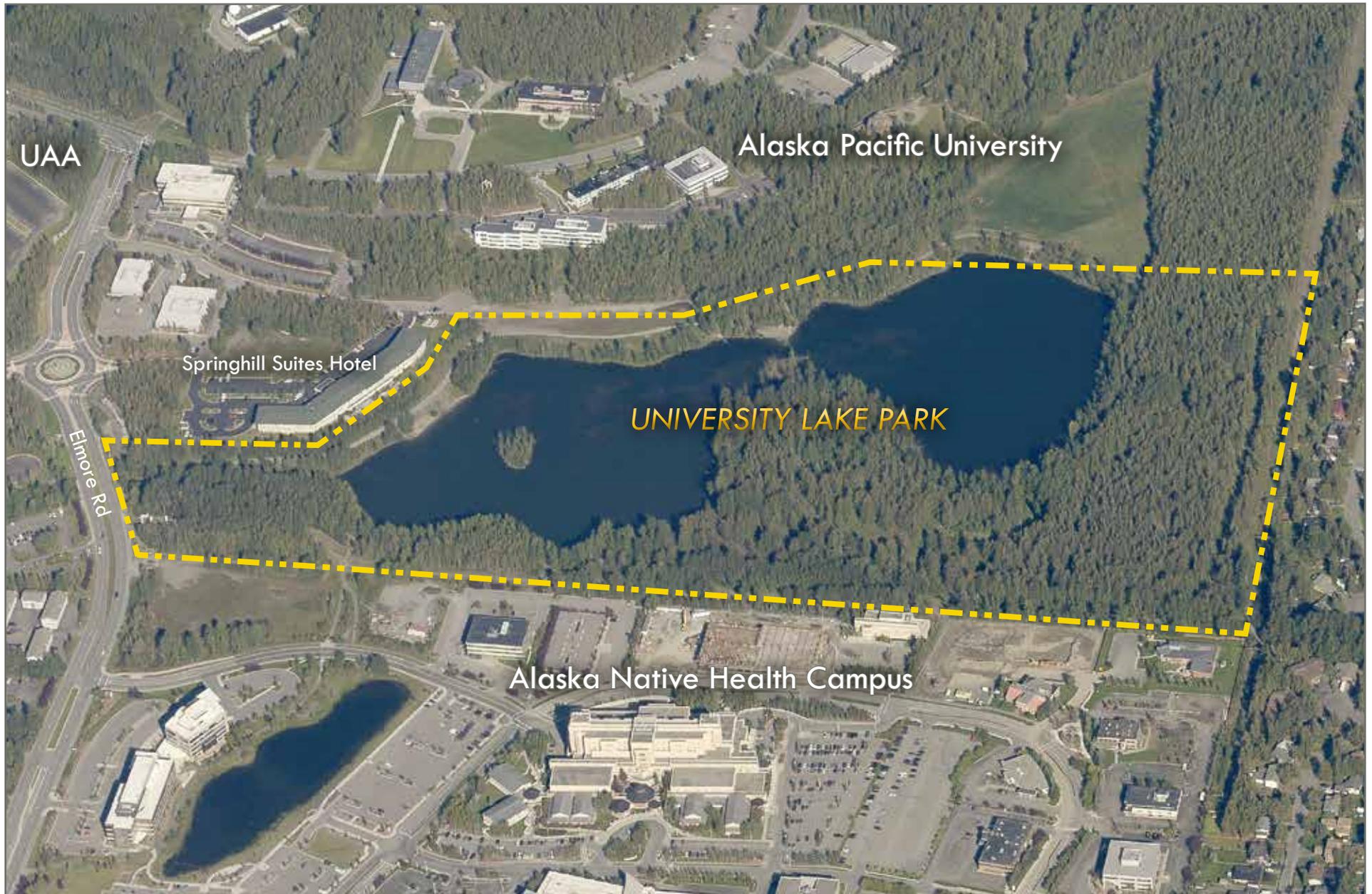
Soils

Soils tend to be gravelly, which is the reason the location was favored for gravel extraction. The composition of soils does change throughout the site with some areas comprised of silty soils. Surficial soils are exposed where paths are located and are typically fine grained.

The southeastern corner of the site features a higher concentration of silts, a legacy from Chester Creek's meandering channel and historical flooding.



Figure 4: Aerial image of University Lake Park and surrounding UMED institutions



Topography

The park is relatively flat with little more than fifteen to twenty feet of elevation change from the eastern end of the park to the western end.

The greatest change in elevation occurs at the lake edge where surrounding topography drops in some areas between 10 to 20 feet from upland areas to the lake edge. The lake shore is typically steep with a slope of approximately one foot vertical drop for three feet of horizontal run. This tends to result in erosion wherever the public uses the shoreline for access to the lake.

Two islands are located in the lake, one at the lake's narrow "waist" and one in the western side of the lake.



Waterways

University Lake is fed by the South Fork of Chester Creek. The creek flows east to west, entering the park at the southeast corner of the property. Chester Creek continues along a straightened channel before meandering north into University Lake. Where Chester Creek enters University Lake, a delta has formed from deposits of silt and sediment. Chester Creek exits University Lake at the western end of the lake where it passes under Elmore Road before continuing its progression to Cook Inlet.

University Lake water levels are generally static with subtle variations depending on the time of year and amount of rainfall. However, it should be noted that in recent years newly formed beaver dams in Chester Creek west of University Lake/east of Elmore Road have raised the level of the lake by approximately one to two feet.

There are no classified wetlands within University Lake Park.

Stormwater

There are three stormwater outfalls that drain into University Lake and Chester Creek within the boundaries of the park. Stormwater from the Alaska Native Health Campus enters into the lake at its southwestern end. Runoff from University Lake Drive and surrounding paved areas enters the lake in a pipe at the northwestern side.

Utilities

The site does not presently have utilities (e.g., lighting, water) to support park uses. However, the park is bordered by a number of utility easements.

The site does support underground storm drain systems running into the lake from off-site roads, and parking lots.

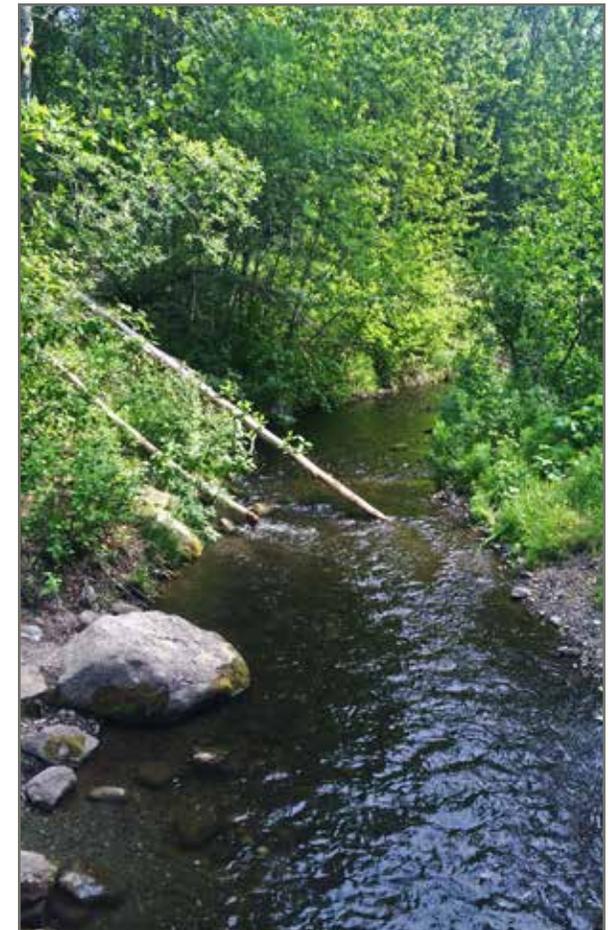
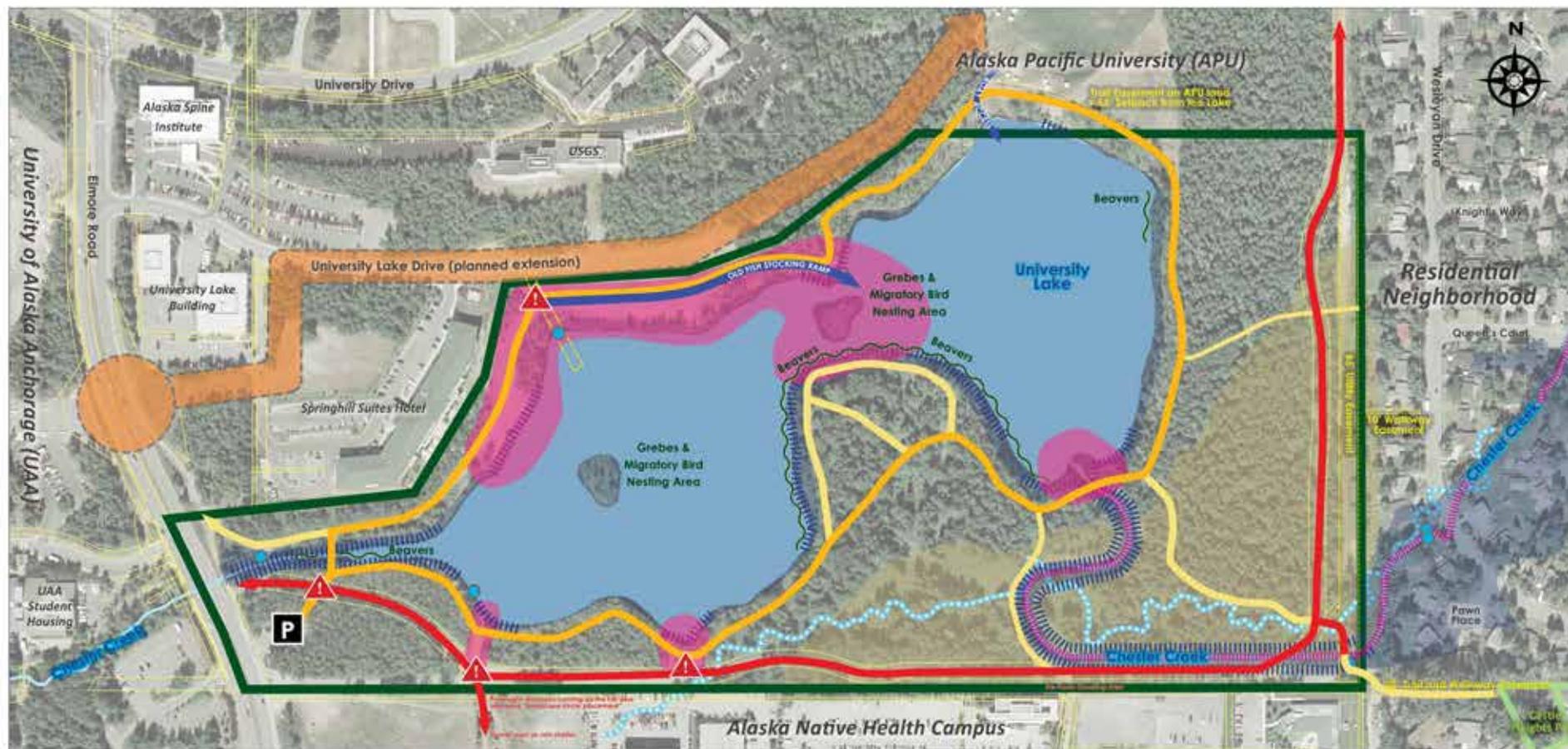


Figure 5: Site inventory and analysis of existing conditions



LEGEND

SITE CONTEXT

- Municipal Parkland
- Parcel Boundaries (Private, Institutional)
- University Lake Drive (planned corridor)
- Platfied Easement

NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

- University Lake (Historical gravel pit, formerly "Lake Lake")
- Pre-1980 Chester Creek Channel
- Current Chester Creek Channel (Chester Creek was diverted to flow into an old gravel pit and create University Lake.)
- Wetlands
- 100-Year Flood Zone (2009 FEMA)
- Unstable Channel/Shoreline Erosion
- Silty Soils
- Storm Drain (Stormwater Outfall)
- Wildlife Concerns

INFRASTRUCTURE & CIRCULATION

- P Parking/Trailhead
- Multi-Use Path (Leash Required)
- Soft-Surface Trails (Off-Leash Allowed)
- Soft-Surface Trails (Leash Required)
- Boat Access Point
- ▲ Circulation Bottlenecks
- Dog "Play Zones" (Under dog enclosure, no drinking, and other access areas)



Sources: Municipality of Anchorage, GIS Services; FEMA FIRM Maps (2009); Chester Creek Watershed Plan (2014 Draft); APU Master Plan Update (2012); and Friends of University Lake Park Historical Documents (1998-2009).
 Disclaimer: Mapping is based on generalized public data, and is intended only for conceptual recreational planning purposes.

Access and Circulation

University Lake Park's central location within the UMED District make the park easily accessible by road and trails. Elmore Road serves as the primary access point for visitors arriving by automobile. A small developed parking lot accommodates up to 22 vehicles with additional on-street parking located along University Lake Drive. Visitors can also access the park via a well developed network of multi-use trails that enable bicyclists, walkers and skiers to access the park from numerous entry points located along the periphery of the park.

Local Roadways

University Lake Park is bordered by Elmore Road to the west of the park. According to the 2011 Official Streets and Highways Plan, Elmore Road is classified as a Class II Minor Arterial with 10,000 to 20,000 average daily traffic (ADT).

University Lake Drive, to the north of the park, terminates at a cul-de-sac approximately 1000 feet east of the Elmore Drive intersection. The road carries local traffic to the University Lake Building (UAA), the Alaska Spine Institute, and the Marriott Springhill Suites Hotel. On-street parking is available along University Lake Drive.

Current plans to extend University Lake Drive are in development with construction anticipated in the near future. As planned, the road project will extend University Lake Drive to the east along the northern boundary of the park to the APU field, where it will continue north eventually connecting to University Drive in the core of the APU campus. Current plans show fencing along the road which will further define the park's northern boundary with APU.

Vehicle Access and Parking

University Lake Park is a popular destination with many visitors arriving by vehicle. Vehicle access is limited to parking areas located at the periphery of the park.

Parking for University Lake Park is available at three locations. The main parking lot is located off of Elmore Road. Elmore Road is divided by a median and access to the parking lot is from the northbound lanes only. The parking lot is paved with 22 spaces and includes a Type II Park Sign, trash can, regulatory signage and a Mutt Mitt Station. The parking lot is signed for 2 hour parking.

An overflow parking lot is located directly south of the main parking lot and is also accessi-

ble from Elmore Road. The small gravel lot straddles the boundary of park property and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium property, providing an additional six parking spaces. This small lot also provides access to several utility boxes.

On-street parking is available along University Lake Drive on the south side of the road, west of the hotel driveway. Parking in the cul-de-sac is prohibited and is signed accordingly. Regardless, cars frequently park in this location.

Additionally, the University Lake Loop Trail functions as a service road providing access to maintenance and emergency vehicles to areas within the park.





Bike and Pedestrian Access

For non-motorized users, University Lake Park is easily accessible from a number of locations along the trail system as well as from neighboring institutions and residential neighborhoods. A major multi-use trail (Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Connector Trail or “Tour of Anchorage Trail”) runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the park connecting visitors to the park and to other destinations in the UMED District.

From the south, the park is easily accessible from the Alaska Native Health Campus. Although, there are several defined access points, the close proximity to ANHC properties to the south allows for access at almost any location.

Near the southwest corner of the park, a small roundabout connects two major multi-use trails: the Chester Creek Trail and Campbell Creek Trail. West of the roundabout, the multi-use trail connects to a bike path running north-south along Elmore Road.

From the southeast, a prominent paved/gravel trail provides access from Castle Heights Park and the neighborhood via a bridge near the corner of the property. A ten foot trail easement located between Queen’s Court and Pawn Place also provides access to the park from Wesleyan Drive.

Along the northern boundary of the park, visitors can access the park from the APU campus and University Lake Drive.

Transit

The UMED District and University Lake Park are served by a number of People Mover transit routes. A transit stop is located directly north of the main parking lot on Elmore Drive. Currently, bus routes 1, 13, 45, and 102 provide service to this location.

ANHC “Smoke Free” Campus

In recent years, University Lake Park has become the de facto smoking area for ANHC employees and visitors after the health campus’ decision to become “smoke free”. This has resulted in poorer air quality for those recreating on parkland and an increase in cigarette butts and litter. Efforts will need to be made in the future to resolve this issue in coordination with ANHC representatives.

Developed Facilities

University Lake Park is a natural area with few developed facilities. Facilities currently developed at the park support existing use patterns and include site amenities, a parking lot, signage and wayfinding, trails and open space, and water access.

Site Amenities

University Lake Park offers park standard amenities to support use of the park. These amenities include: park benches, trash cans, mutt mitts stations, wayfinding kiosks and maps.

Benches are found in several locations along trails and at key intersections within the park. The benches are a mix of styles. Newer benches are MOA Park Standard benches. Several older benches along the south shore of the lake were installed by a Boy Scout Troop at a time that lake levels were lower and are now partially submerged in the lake.

Trash receptacles are provided at park entrances and some key intersections. Receptacles are a mix of MOA Park Standards and inexpensive 30 gallon galvanized metal trash cans, chained to bollards. Because of the popularity of the park and the disposal of dog waste on site, trash cans require frequent servicing. Over the years, the Parks and Recreation Department has partnered with volunteers from local user groups to maintain trash cans.

Mutt mitts are provided at a number of locations within the park, including the main park entrances.

Parking Lot

University Lake Park has one developed parking lot located off of Elmore Road. The parking lot is paved, has 22 spaces, and is signed two hour parking. The parking lot also includes a Type II Park Sign, a trash can, regulatory signage and a Mutt Mitt station.



Signage and Wayfinding

University Lake Park has signage and wayfinding to help visitors navigate the park. This consists of an information kiosk, park maps, trail wayfinding, and regulatory signage. Overall, signage and wayfinding at University Lake Park is inconsistent and often confusing. Several efforts over the years have been made to improve wayfinding; however, the result has been a mix of standards that lacks uniformity.



Information Kiosk

An information kiosk is located near the parking lot at the junction of the paved multi-use trail and the soft-surface trail. The information kiosk includes a park map, rules and regulations sign, and space for fliers. A trash can and Mutt Mitt station are located next to the kiosk.



Wayfinding

Wayfinding is provided at key trail intersections and is a mix of old and new park standards. Wayfinding includes orientation maps, and “bollard” style wayfinding with direction markers. Park orientation maps are also provided at three locations with “you are here” denoted on each map. Along the trails, bollard style wayfinding signage identifies on-leash/off-leash trails with icons and directional arrows. In its current form, park wayfinding does not provide a uniform appearance and the messaging of “on-leash” versus “off-leash” is unclear and confusing for many users.



Regulatory Signage

There are a number of regulatory signs within the park that designate park boundaries, outline rules and regulations, identify sensitive wildlife habitat, and provide other guidance or notifications to the general public. Regulatory signs identifying sensitive wildlife areas are found along the shoreline of the south peninsula and where Chester Creek enters University Lake. Additional regulatory signage identifying the park boundaries and “on-leash”/“off-leash” areas are located throughout the park and at trail junctions.

Trails

Trails are a major visitor attraction to University Lake Park. The park has both paved and unpaved trails and is an important recreation destination and transportation link. Along the park's eastern and southern boundary, a paved multi-use trail links the park to two major greenbelt trail systems: the Chester Creek Trail and the Campbell Creek Trail. Within the park, soft-surface trails offer visitors a more quiet and contemplative experience in nature. Perhaps, the park's main attraction is the popular 1.1 mile University Lake Loop Trail. This loop is designated as an "off-leash" trail, allowing for owners to recreate with and exercise dogs off-leash. On all other trails, dogs are required to be "on-leash".

Figure 6: Trails and access points at University Lake Park

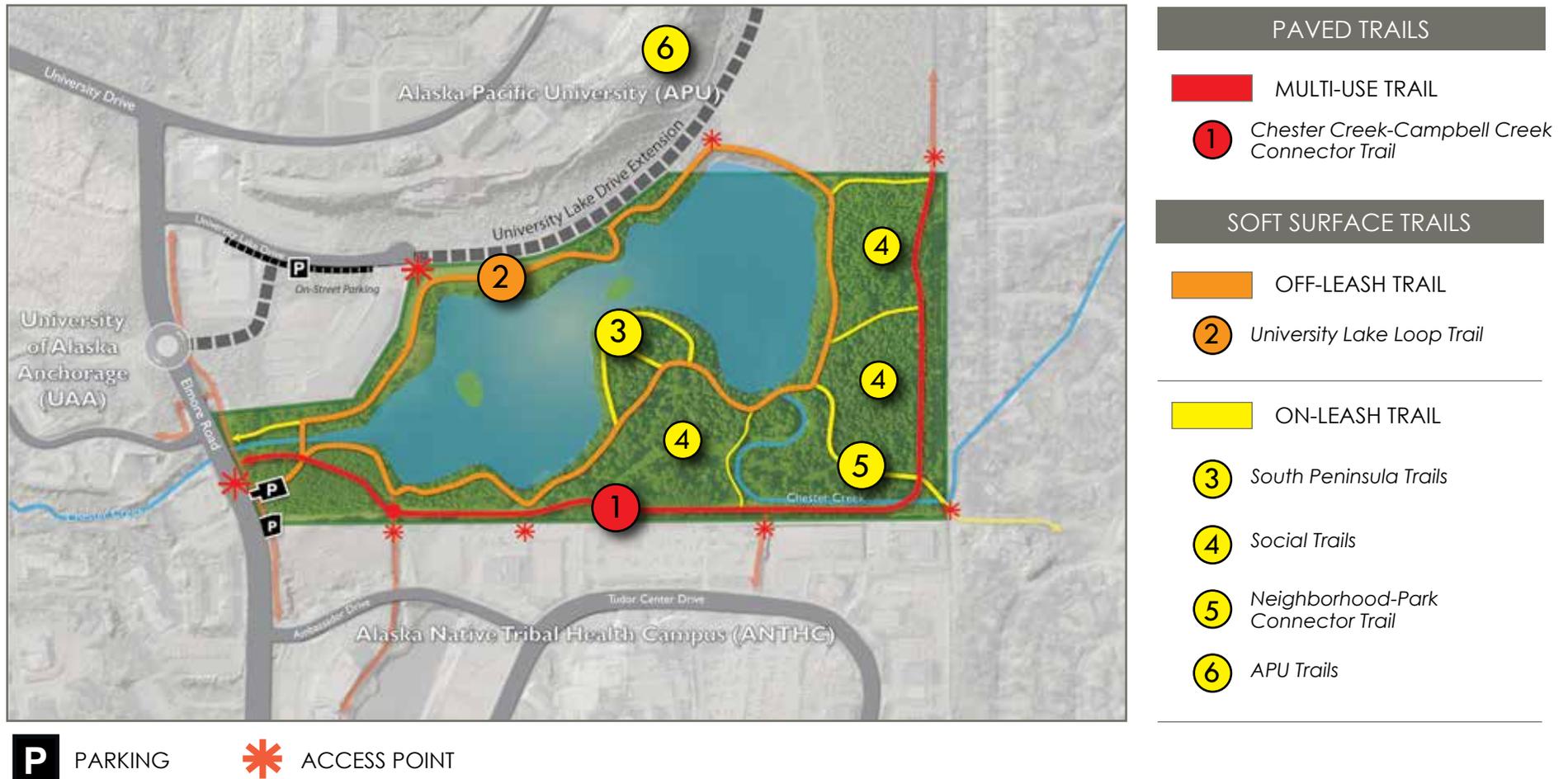
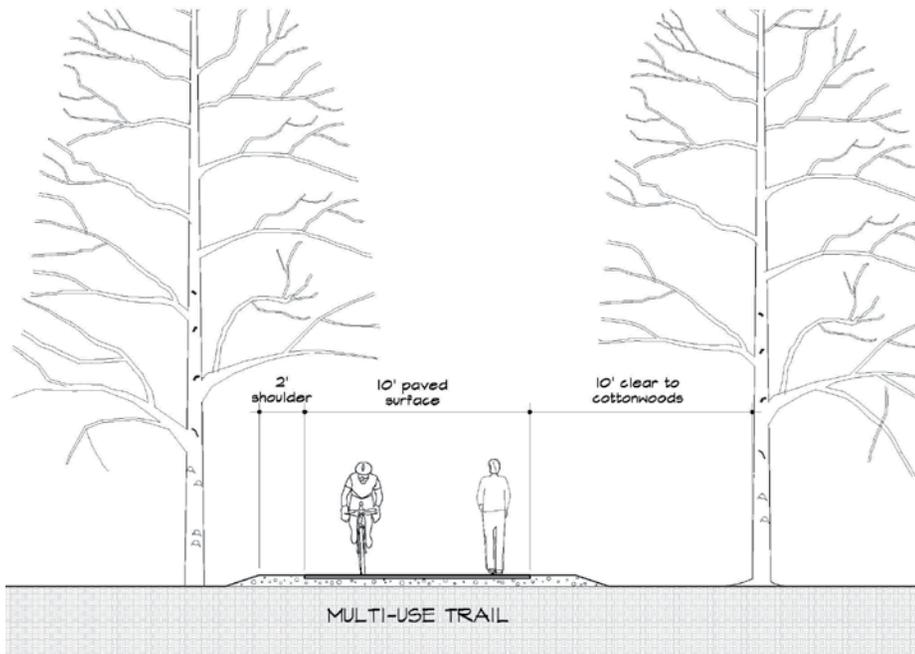


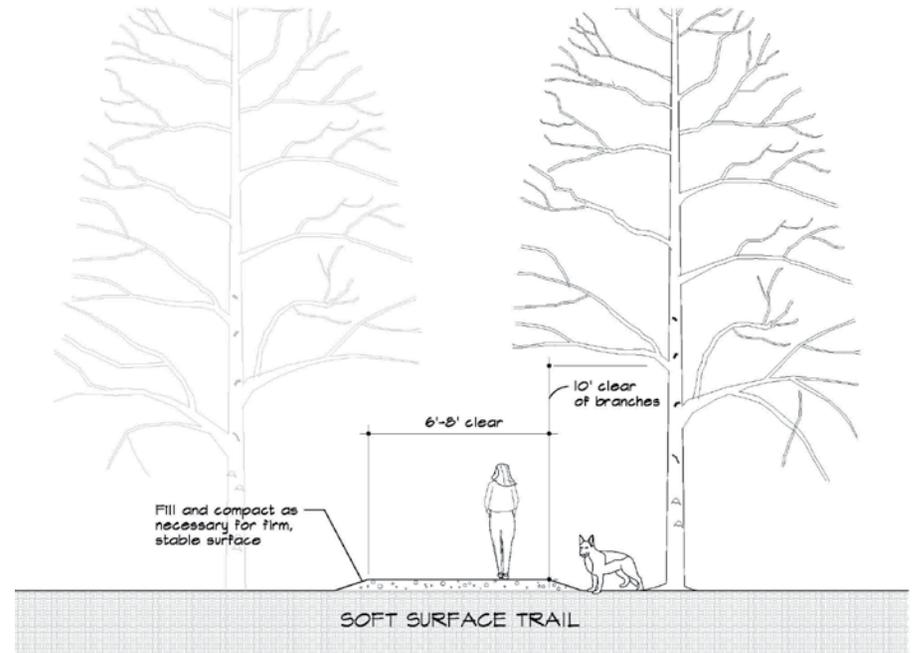
Figure 7: Cross sections of multi-use and soft surface trails



Paved Multi-Use Trails

The Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Connector Trail is a paved multi-use trail running along eastern and southern boundary of the park. The trail is 10-12 feet wide with an 8-10 foot wide asphalt surface and soft shoulders. Overall, the trail is in generally good condition.

The trail is often referred to as the “Tour of Anchorage Trail” named after the popular ski race that utilizes the trail for the event. This multi-use trail is an important link in the city’s recreation and non-motorized transportation system. The trail connects the Campbell Creek Trail to the Chester Creek Trail and provides connections to other developed trails and institutions within the UMED District.



Soft Surface Trails

University Lake Park offers a variety of soft-surface trails for visitors desiring a more quiet experience in nature. Soft surface trails range from two foot wide undeveloped social trails to eight foot wide ADA accessible trails. Soft surface trails are typically 6-8 feet wide and a combination of bare earth and D-1 gravel. Social trails are bare earth with exposed roots.

The most well-used soft surface trail is the popular 1.1 mile University Lake Loop trail. Dogs are permitted “off-leash” on this trail not precluding other uses. Because of the park’s designation as an “off-leash” dog park space, it is necessary to define which soft-surface trails are permitted for “off-leash” activity and which trails dogs must be “on-leash”.

Trail Descriptions

University Lake Park has a mix of trails providing something for all users. The following section describes individual trails and highlights some of their unique attributes. Trails are illustrated on page 19 for reference.



Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Connector Trail

The Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Connector Trail (aka “Tour of Anchorage Trail”) runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the park. This paved multi-use trail is an important link in the city’s recreation and non-motorized transportation system. The trail connects two major multi-use trails and provides connections to other developed trails and institutions within the UMED District.



University Lake Loop Trail

University Lake Park has one trail designated for “off-leash” dog activity. The “off-leash” trail is a popular walking loop for dogs and owners as well as nearby employees and residents. The “off-leash” trail is a 1.1 mile loop that meanders between the forest and lake edge. The lake loop varies in width from 4 feet along the south side of the lake to 12 feet along the north and east side. The trail tread is primarily D-1 gravel and varies in quality depending on the location.

The lake loop traverses a portion of APU property north of the lake. A trail easement was formalized in 1985 through a recorded agreement between APU and the Municipality. (Plat No 85-299).



South Peninsula Trail

A short trail branches off from the main Lake Loop Trail to the shore of the peninsula along the south side of the lake. Due to sensitive wildlife habitat (primarily beavers and nesting birds), dogs are required to be on a leash. Two beaver lodges are located along the shoreline and a small island located just off-shore provides habitat for nesting birds. Beavers are known to be aggressive when protecting kits and reports of conflicts between off-leash dogs and beavers have been documented.



Social Trails

There are a number of minor social trails throughout the park. Several undeveloped social trails are located in the forest east of University Lake. These trails connect the Lake Loop to the multi-use trail and College Gate neighborhood. Another prominent social trail runs along the bank of Chester Creek connecting the Lake Loop and the multi-use trail to the south.



Neighborhood - Park Connector Trail

A well defined 4-6 foot gravel trail connects the University Lake Loop Trail with the paved multi-use trail at the southeastern corner of the park property. The trail continues on across a bridge to Castle Heights Park connecting University Lake Park and the College Gate neighborhood



APU Trails

APU's Mahaffey Trail System is located just north of University Lake Park and provides 5 kms of continuous trails for Nordic skiing, biking and hiking. These trails are located on APU land and are not part of University Lake Park. Regardless of efforts to sign and fence areas along the boundary of the park, many park users view these trails as an extension of public parkland. This has created management challenges for the Parks and Recreation Department and a point of contention for APU administrators.

Bridges

There are four bridges located within University Lake Park. Two bridges are located along the University Lake Loop Trail, one where Chester Creek enters University Lake and the other where Chester Creek exits University Lake. A third bridge crosses over Chester Creek along the multi-use trail. A fourth bridge crosses Chester Creek on the neighborhood-park connector trail. The bridges are steel with wood surface and are in generally good condition.



Open Space

University Lake Park and adjacent right-of-way offer 1.25 acres of open space north of the lake and east of the University Lake Drive cul-de-sac. The area is a popular spot for exercising dogs and socializing with other dog owners and park users.

Plans to extend University Lake Drive in the near future will impact existing open space used for recreation. The road extension project will likely reduce the area used for open recreation by roughly half an acre. Draft plans of the road extension show a fence along the southern perimeter of the road which should allow for continued and safe off-leash activity within parkland.

Throughout the planning process, members of the public voiced a desire for additional open space, in particular the acquisition of APU endowment lands (soccer fields north of the fence). Conversations with APU during this planning process reveal that the University has plans to develop endowment lands north of the park in the near to medium term. Given APU's plans, it is unlikely that APU would consider the sale of endowment lands for park use.

Water Access

Access to water for recreation makes University Lake a popular draw for visitors. At present, water access points are not formally established; however, many informal access points have developed over the years. While some locations are well suited, unfettered access to the lake has resulted in the trampling of vegetation and the erosion of the shoreline.



Some water access points have become established in sensitive wildlife areas. The south peninsula and shallow area of water dividing the two sides of the lake have become popular access point and have a notably high concentration of nesting birds and beaver dens.

Balancing water access and recreation with the protection of sensitive wildlife will be necessary for the long-term success of University Lake Park.

Wildlife and Natural Resources

University Lake Park's natural resources and undeveloped lands serve important ecological functions and provide valuable habitat for wildlife. As development continues in and around the UMED District, University Lake Park will play an increasingly important role as a natural area. This section discusses wildlife, shoreline and streambank erosion, and water quality.

Wildlife

University Lake Park is part of a larger system of greenspace that provides important habitat for wildlife. Large and small mammals as well as fish and waterfowl are found throughout the year at University Lake Park.

Fish

Numerous species of fish can be found in University Lake, including various stickleback, slimy sculpin, Pacific lamprey, coho salmon, Dolly Varden, and pink salmon. Rainbow Trout were introduced by ADF&G between 1971 and 1973 and their introduction appears to have been successful. Alaska blackfish have also been found in University Lake, apparently introduced contrary to state law. Their presence provides a potential for spreading throughout the Chester Creek system.

Waterfowl

University Lake is a nesting place for waterfowl. Grebe nests can be found on and around the two small islands located in University Lake. Other waterfowl are often found along the shoreline and on the islands within the lake.

Small Mammals

Beavers are highly active at University Lake Park with beaver dens and dams observed in several locations. University Lake is ideal habitat for beavers with an abundance of cottonwood trees for food and den construction. Beavers have had a negative impact on the shoreline of University Lake that has led to destabilization and erosion. Additionally, there have been reports of dogs being attacked by beavers protecting their dens, kits, or food sources. Many of these interactions could be prevented in the future with adequate regulatory and interpretive signage.

Large Mammals

Large mammals, such as bears and moose can be found in and around University Lake Park. The Park is part of a larger system of greenspace that includes Chester Creek and undeveloped wetlands. These undeveloped natural areas provide important habitat and foraging opportunities for large mammals. As the UMED District continues to develop, greenspace will become an increasingly important commodity.

At times, there are interactions between humans and large mammals. While these interactions can be enriching and unique to life in Anchorage, they can often lead to conflict and distress. Interactions between off-leash dogs and moose can be particularly stressful for all parties involved, especially during the fall rutting season and in early summer when cows are protecting their young calves.

While bear sightings are less frequent, they are not uncommon at University Lake Park. In recent years, several families of black bears have been active in the area leading to the re-location of the bears. The presence of salmon in University Lake and Chester Creek will likely continue to attract bears into the future. There may also be coyote, lynx, and red fox present in the park.

Shoreline and Streambank Erosion

The popularity of University Lake Park has had some negative impacts on the lake shoreline and streambanks. Evidence of erosion and trampling of vegetation is common in high traffic areas of the park; particularly along the shoreline of University Lake and riparian areas adjacent to Chester Creek.

Shoreline erosion is most common in areas used to access the water. Since water access points are not formally established and managed, widespread dispersed use has led to the erosion of University Lake's shoreline. This erosion is intensified by the removal of trees and shoreline vegetation by resident beavers.

A healthy shoreline and streambank helps to slow runoff and filter pollutants which improves water quality in waterways. A healthy shoreline also protects salmon and other wildlife that depend on the area for nesting, habitat, and foraging.

Watershed Health

Water quality, stream habitat, and fish passage are growing concerns in the Anchorage bowl. The *Chester Creek Watershed Plan* identifies issues and proposes actions to help address water quality in and around University Lake Park.

In addition to the action items proposed in the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan*, dog owner education (Scoop the Poop), annual dog waste clean-ups, and dog waste bag kiosks all help to improve stewardship and public awareness of watershed health.

Water Quality

University Lake is located in the Chester Creek watershed and is fed by the South Fork of Chester Creek. The lake serves an important water quality function in settling upstream pollution from Chester Creek.

Chester Creek and University Lake are listed on the State of Alaska's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. Under the Clean Water Act, states are required to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL), establishing maximum acceptable limits of pollution for impaired waterways. In Alaska, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) oversees the program.

Fecal coliform bacteria is the primary issue affecting the water quality of Chester Creek and University Lake. Surface runoff during rain events and snow melt transports fecal coliform bacteria from urban and residential areas into Anchorage's creeks and waterways. The DEC attributes waterfowl, domestic animals and wildlife as likely sources of accumulated bacteria. According to the DEC, "wildlife may be a considerable source of fecal coliform... however, it is difficult to estimate fecal coliform contributions from wildlife" due to the mobility and large ranges of wildlife in the Anchorage area.¹

Another water quality concern is off-leash dog activity at University Lake. While most dog owners who recreate at University Lake Park

¹ Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. "Total Maximum Daily Load for Fecal Coliform in Chester Creek, University Lake, and Westchester Lagoon, Anchorage, Alaska." 2005.



are responsible and pick up after their pets, visible signs of dog waste are still present. Dog waste that is not picked up can run off into local waterways leading to elevated counts of fecal coliform bacteria. Efforts by local groups, such as the Anchorage Waterways Council and Anchorage Unleashed, to “Scoop the Poop” have been successful in removing pet waste and in raising public awareness.

Water quality and fecal coliform levels vary greatly within specific locations at University Lake. Water quality sampling taken at the inlet of University Lake show higher levels of fecal coliform bacteria than at the outlet of the lake. This demonstrates that the lake functions much like a settling basin.

According to the DEC’s 2005 TMDL, the “calculated 30-day geometric means are approximately 70 percent less below the lake than they are above, indicating that the lake is a net sink of bacteria.” Additionally, fecal coliform levels vary depending on the season with greater settling occurring during winter when surface ice results in less turbidity.

CHAPTER 3: THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Planning Process

The planning team utilized a multifaceted approach to gather information and explore the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities at University Lake Park. Information gathered early in the process was presented to the public for additional input. Public input was used to identify preferences and inform the development of the master plan and recommendations. Methods used in the development of the master plan are outlined below and described in further detail on the following pages.

Information Gathering

- Conducted field research to identify use patterns and inventory existing conditions
- Reviewed relevant policy documents and land use plans to provide context and ensure conformance with adopted plans
- Interviewed stakeholders to identify issues and concerns and better understand institutional and user group perceptions of the park

Public Involvement

- Facilitated two public workshops and three meetings with an advisory group to gather input and feedback from stakeholders and to identify public preferences for future management and development of the park

Plan Development

- Researched best practices to identify strategies to address issues and inform recommendations

Master Plan and Recommendations

- Developed proposed master plan and recommendations



Information Gathering

The planning team utilized a variety of methods to gather information early in the process. This information was used to inform the planning team, and provided a foundation for future public involvement and plan development. Methods include stakeholder interviews, policy and plan review, site inventory and analysis of existing conditions.

Stakeholder Interviews

In Spring 2015, the project team interviewed stakeholders representing neighboring institutions, user groups, and community organizations. Information gathered during this process helped the planning team better understand institutional and user group perceptions of the park. Interviews revealed several key issues and common themes to be addressed in this master plan. A summary of stakeholder interview themes is located in Appendix B.

Policy and Plan Review

The planning team reviewed a number of planning and policy documents to provide context and ensure conformance with adopted plans. This includes the *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan*; the *UMED District Plan*; the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan*; the *Areawide Trails Plan*; and Anchorage Municipal Code of Ordinances. A complete summary of plan and relevant policy documents is located in Appendix A.

Site Inventory

Over the course of 4 months, the planning team conducted an inventory of University Lake Park and the surrounding areas using GIS technology, aerial imagery, and field observations. The planning team also reviewed technical data and reports related to waterways and development history. Data gathered during this process was used to analyze existing conditions.

Analysis of Existing Conditions

Using information gathered during the stakeholder interviews, policy and plan review, and site inventory; the planning team conducted an analysis of existing conditions. This exercise allowed the planning team to identify potential opportunities and constraints to future development and management of University Lake Park.



Public Involvement

Public involvement in park planning is essential to ensuring that the management and development of University Lake Park is consistent with the desires of the community. The public involvement process was led by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department with support from local planning and design firms Stantec and Earthscape. The planning team facilitated a public involvement process that included outreach, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and meetings with an advisory group.

Outreach

The Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department kicked off the project with a presentation to the University Area Community Council. The planning team also reached out to stakeholders including neighboring institutions and user groups to recruit individuals to participate on an advisory group. The Department also maintained a website and a mailing list throughout the planning process. Members of the public who provided contact information were sent email updates and information on future public meetings. The Department also provided emailed updates to community councils in the area to inform them of additional opportunities to participate.

Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholders were interviewed early in the planning process as a means to gather information and identify issues that should be addressed in the master plan. Interviews were conducted with representatives from neighboring institutions, user groups, natural resource managers, and community members. From these interviews, ten “stakeholder interview themes” were developed and used as a foundation for subsequent planning. For more information see Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Themes.

Advisory Group Meetings

The planning team worked with an advisory group throughout the development of the master plan to ensure that recommendations identified in the master plan align with the desires of the community. The advisory group was comprised of diverse stakeholders each representing a different interest or institution.

Advisory group members were tasked with providing insight, information, recommendations and feedback to help guide the development of the master plan. As the planning team gathered information through site analysis and public meetings, it was presented to the advisory group for deliberation and discussion. Issues and points of contention were resolved and general consensus was achieved for a preferred alternative master plan. Meetings are summarized in Appendix C: Advisory Group Meeting Minutes.



Public Meetings

The planning team hosted two public meetings to gather input, identify issues, and solicit feedback from the public. Both meetings were well attended with close to 100 people attending the first meeting and 40 people attending the second meeting. Members of the public who attended the meetings represented a wide range of perspectives and interests. Many of those in attendance were dog owners and vocal supporters of University Lake Park as an off-leash area.

Information gathered during the public meetings was reported back to the advisory group for discussion. Several members of the advisory group participated in the public meetings, providing additional resources and information, and were available to answer questions and record public input. For a more information see Appendix D: Public Meeting Input.

Approval Process

A draft master plan was presented to the University Area Community Council for a Resolution of Support on April 6, 2016. A Public Hearing Draft Master Plan will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission for their approval. Pending PRC approval, the master plan will be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for final approval. For resolutions see Appendix E: Resolutions.

Stakeholder Participation

Master planning for University Lake Park benefited from the participation of a wide range of stakeholders including neighboring institutions, residents, user groups, and natural resource managers.

Stakeholder participation throughout the process ensured that the future management and development of the park is compatible with institutional growth while continuing to provide active and healthy recreation to the public. The following organizations participated on the University Lake Park Master Plan advisory group.

- Alaska Fish and Game
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Pacific University
- Anchorage Unleashed
- Anchorage Waterways Council
- Animal Control Advisory Board
- Friends of University Lake
- MOA Watershed Management
- MOA Parks and Recreation
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University Area Community Council
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

PLAN DEVELOPMENT



ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING #2



ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING #3



UNIVERSITY AREA
CC RESOLUTION

APPROVALS



PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION APPROVAL



PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION APPROVAL

Plan Development

Development of the University Lake Park Master Plan is influenced by a number of factors including existing conditions, public preferences for management and development, and best practices in natural resource and public lands management. This master plan identifies public preferences for future management and development of the park and utilizes best practices to resolve issues and address concerns.

Public Input and Preferences

The public involvement phase revealed a range of perceptions and preferences for future management and development of University Lake Park. Utilizing a variety of public engagement tools, the planning team presented issues to the public, proposed a range of solutions, and asked members of the public to identify their preferred alternatives for each issue. Public preferences were presented to an advisory group for further deliberation and recommendations. A summary of public input is provided in Appendix D: Public Meeting Input.

Research and Best Practices

Best practices research was conducted to identify solutions to unresolved issues and to inform the development of master plan recommendations. Throughout the planning process, a number of issues were identified for which there was no clear consensus on a solution. To resolve these issues, the planning team researched best practices in natural resource management, recreation, public policy, and land use. Based on this research, a series of alternatives were developed and presented to the public and advisory group for prioritization. Once public preferences were identified, additional research was conducted and the alternatives were refined into a preferred alternative and plan recommendations were developed.

Off-Leash vs On-Leash

The planning process revealed a range of perspectives on off-leash vs on-leash activity at University Lake Park. While some prefer the park as it was prior to the 2003 designation as an official off-leash area, the majority of those participating in the planning process favor the off-leash designation at University Lake Park. Almost all participants recognize that additional maintenance and management is needed and that other off-leash areas should be developed to relieve pressure from University Lake Park.





CHAPTER 4: THE MASTER PLAN

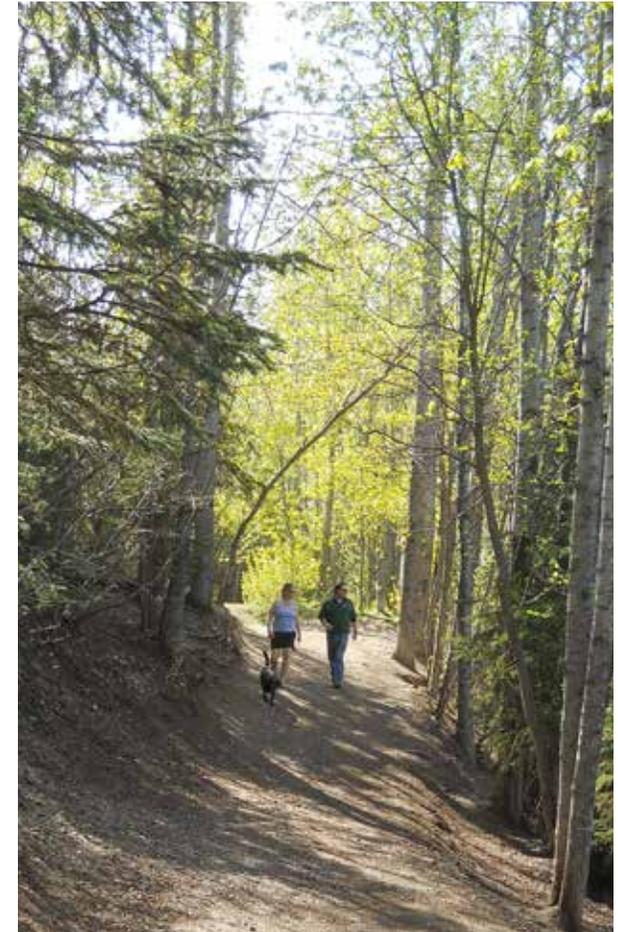
Master Plan

The University Lake Park Master Plan provides a vision for the management, maintenance, and development of the park over the next ten years. During the planning process, several issues and concerns were identified. This master plan recognizes those issues and concerns and provides recommendations to address and improve existing conditions. These recommendations are based on best practices and public preferences for the development and management of the park.

The planning process revealed a number of themes in which there was general agreement among members of the public. Participants in the public meetings valued the natural setting and the trails for quiet recreation. There was also general agreement among members of the public regarding a number of the qualities that make University Lake a community gem, and the challenges to be addressed in this master plan:

Common Themes/General Agreement Items

- University Lake Park is a valued natural area in a rapidly urbanizing area
- The park is being “loved to death”
- Water quality and habitat restoration need to be addressed
- The numerous different recreation interests often experience conflicts
- Signage, boundaries and wayfinding are unclear and need to be improved
- Most park users are responsible, although not all
- Parking does not meet current demand and needs to be addressed
- Better management, maintenance, and enforcement is needed



Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative master plan largely maintains the park much as it exists today with improvements to existing facilities. It is intended to provide a graphic representation of desired future conditions which are based on input gathered and values expressed throughout the public engagement process. This is articulated in the following vision statement for the future of University Lake Park.

Vision

“University Lake Park is a treasured natural area in one of the most rapidly developing areas of Anchorage, providing a key hub for commuters, walkers, skiers, cyclists, dog walkers, and neighbors to transit, meet, recreate, and enjoy a spectacular setting.”

The preferred alternative identifies desired future conditions which are organized by topic into the six categories listed below. Each category includes a series of recommendations. Specific recommendations intended to accomplish the preferred alternative are described in detail in the “Recommendations” section on the following pages.

1. Retain the Natural Character
2. Water Quality, Wildlife, and Natural Resources Management
3. Trails to Support a Variety of Uses
4. Improve Signage and Wayfinding
5. Parking to Meet Demand
6. Maintenance and Amenities

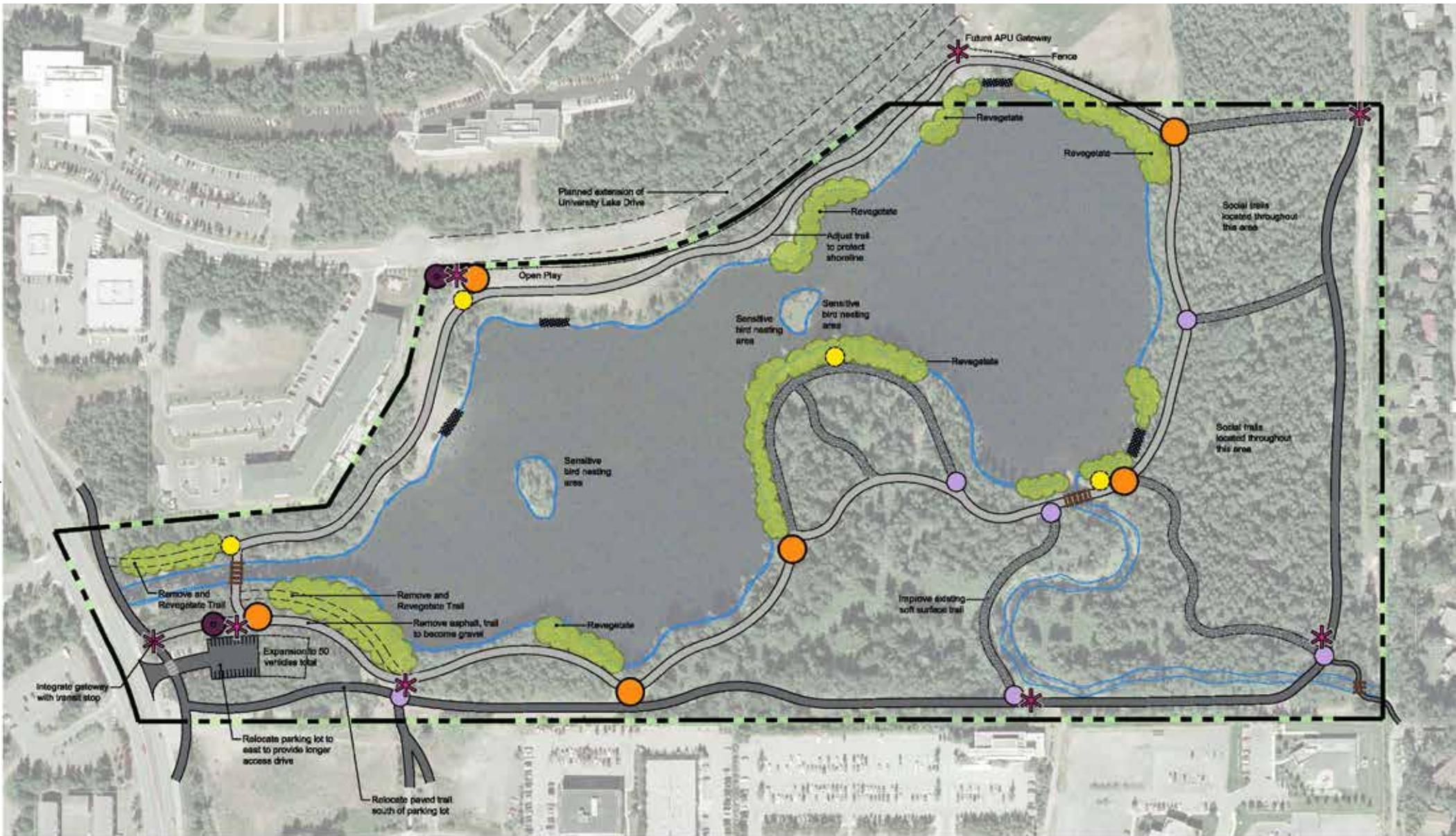
Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to accomplish the desired future conditions identified during the public process. Recommendations seek to address specific issues and are informed by best practices. Recommendations are organized by topic and based on the six categories of desired future conditions outlined in the “Preferred Alternative”.

Legend

-  Node-Trash/Seating/Mutt Mitt/Map/Wayfinding
-  Restrooms/Port-A-Potty
-  Interpretive Material
-  Wayfinding
-  Gateway-Park ID Structure/Safety Fence/Rules/Regs/Park Map/Wayfinding
-  Water Entry
-  Bridge
-  Paved-On Leash
-  Soft Surface (off leash)
-  Soft Surface (on leash)

Figure 8: Graphic illustration of the Master Plan



University Lake Park





1. Retain the Natural Character

The planning process revealed that the public enjoys University Lake Park much as it is today. Members of the public voiced a strong preference for retaining the natural character of the park. When asked if future development of the park should incorporate more urban elements (i.e. hard-scaped plazas, paved sidewalks, etc.) to better align with the increased urbanization of the growing UMED District, the public was clear that the park should remain rustic, natural, and minimally developed. Further, members of the public cited the increased pressure from urbanization as an important factor in the need to maintain University Lake Park as a natural area. The following are strategies for retaining the natural character of the park.

1.1 Adaptive Park Management

Objective: Provide management and maintenance strategies that improve existing conditions and are responsive to changing preferences.

This master plan provides a ten year vision based on public preferences for desired future conditions. It is intended to be prescriptive enough to realize the community's vision, and flexible enough to evolve with changing community preferences.

Over time, the UMED District will grow and public preferences for the management and development of the park will likely evolve. Additionally, there are a large number of factors outside of the park which influence the function of the park. This includes the impacts of development and urbanization, the loss of greenspace and wildlife habitat within the UMED District, population growth, and up-stream influences on water quality.

The Parks and Recreation Department should adopt an adaptive management approach for University Lake Park. To accomplish this, the Department should monitor maintenance and management strategies over time to determine the overall effectiveness of the program. If the desired results are not being met, decisions should be analyzed and changes should be made to accomplish the desired outcome.

This master plan recommends that the Parks and Recreation Department periodically review the management and maintenance of the park to determine the overall effectiveness and to adopt policy changes and adjust management strategies as necessary.

1.2 Land Use

Objective: Manage University Lake Park as a Natural Resource Area.

The *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan* shows that University Lake Park is both a “Community Use Park” and a “Natural Resource Use Area”. The *Plan* indicates that of the 64 acres of land at University Lake Park, 57.6 are classified as “Natural Resource Acres” and 6.4 are classified as “Community Use Acres”.

Community Use Parks are intended to meet the recreational needs of the larger community as well as “preserving unique landscapes or natural use areas”.

Natural Resource Areas are lands set aside for the “preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space and visual aesthetics or buffering”.



The *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan* states that “access points, trails, nature appreciation, interpretation and education” are all considered appropriate recreational uses of Natural Resource Areas.

While the Natural Resource Area and Community Use Area classifications for University Lake Park are consistent with the *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan*, the Community Use Area classification allows for higher levels of development than proposed in this master plan. The Natural Resource Area designation is consistent with the master plan and the park should be managed as such.



1.3 Future Development

Objective: Maintain the natural character of the park by focusing future development on improving/enhancing existing conditions and adding amenities to improve park users experience.

University Lake Park is a valued greenspace in a rapidly urbanizing area. Future development of the park should focus on retaining the natural character by improving existing conditions; adding amenities such as benches, trash cans, and wayfinding to improve park users experience; and rehabilitating/enhancing natural areas. Specific recommendations for improving existing conditions are outlined on the following pages.





2. Water Quality, Wildlife, and Natural Resource Management

The popularity of University Lake Park has impacted natural resources including water quality and wildlife. Erosion and shoreline degradation are common in high-use areas of the park, particularly at access points to the lake and creek. While maintaining some access to the lake was desired, members of the public support restoration and re-vegetation of degraded areas.

Members of the public also support the need to balance public use with the preservation of greenspace and wildlife habitat. This master plan recommends several natural resource management strategies to improve water quality, protect flora and fauna, and continue public use for years to come. The following are strategies for managing water quality, wildlife, and natural resources.

2.1 Education and Outreach

Objective: Improve park users understanding of the natural environment, watershed health, wildlife, and the impacts of dog waste on water quality.

This master plan proposes that education and outreach tools be employed to improve park users understanding of University Lake Park's unique natural environment.

Regulatory signage and interpretive materials should be provided in sensitive wildlife areas to improve public awareness of local fauna and to protect animals/humans from potentially harmful interactions. Signage should identify any relevant federal, state, or local regulatory information, include emergency contact numbers, and should be accompanied by interpretive information highlighting the species and habitat as well as any sensitivities regarding human interaction.

Interpretative materials should also be provid-

ed highlighting the role of Chester Creek and University Lake as part of the larger Chester Creek Watershed. This is consistent with Goal 6 of the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan* "to promote community and municipal awareness and stewardship of Chester Creek".

To promote good stewardship and improve water quality, educational materials should be provided along with "mutt mitts" and trash cans at key locations such as gateways and nodes. This master plan recommends partnering with groups such as the Anchorage Waterways Council, Anchorage Unleashed, and MOA Watershed Management Department to develop and distribute materials. These materials should provide information discussing the issue of waste cleanup and the impact on water quality from surface runoff. Outreach and events such as the annual "Scoop the Poop" event have proven successful in raising awareness of fecal coliform in local waterways.

2.2 Restoration & Revegetation

Objective: Rehabilitate shoreline and streambank areas impacted by erosion to improve water quality and habitat.

Restoration and revegetation are recommended in shoreline and streambank areas impacted by erosion. Shoreline and streambank rehabilitation through bio-engineering is the preferred method of state and local agencies. Preferred methods for streambank habitat rehabilitation include one or more of the following: brush layering, live staking of trenched willows, vegetative mat, spruce cabling, and coir logs.

Additional revegetation of selected disturbed areas should include native trees, shrubs, and water tolerant plants due to the fluctuation in lake level. Areas of re-vegetation should be isolated from human and wildlife disturbance with temporary fencing for 2-3 years in order to establish growth and should be monitored closely to ensure invasive and noxious weeds are not present. Re-vegetation at upland sites should include only native trees such as spruce, birch, and aspen; all of which are endemic at University Lake Park.

Rehabilitation and revegetation of areas should be coordinated with state and local natural resource managers to provide technical assistance and additional resources as needed.



Figure 9: Illustration of shoreline and streambank rehabilitation applications





2.3 Water Access for Recreation

Objective: Provide designated access points to University Lake to support recreation and minimize widespread trampling and erosion.

University Lake is appreciated not only for its natural beauty but also for the recreation it provides. Access to University Lake should be provided at designated locations to allow for continued recreation while minimizing shoreline trampling and erosion from dispersed access.



The recommendation to provide access to University Lake is consistent with public input and the recommendation of the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan (CSF-4)* which states as an Action Item “create directed access to lake and maintain vegetated buffer outside of access areas, restore vegetated buffer in impacted locations”. (p.67) This is also consistent with recommendation 2.2 Restoration & Revegetation of this master plan.

The preferred alternative identifies water access points at 4 locations:

- 1) Slope east of the hotel
- 2) Area near the inlet of Chester Creek
- 3) The APU boat launch
- 4) The north lawn

Access points should be well defined and easily identifiable. All locations should be stabilized to the extent necessary to provide for dog and human water access. Access points may include regrading at a minimum and design to reduce the possibility of erosion. Consideration should be given to the use of reinforced matting or



permeable erosion grid to protect and stabilize steeper access points.

Other areas that exhibit occasional use should be managed on a case by case basis to determine whether re-vegetation is needed or whether they can be left as is, to handle the use they receive. The plan does not propose to provide a fully vegetated shoreline, but to manage it in a manner that protects water quality and prevents erosion.

Figure 10: Example of a permeable erosion grid used for stabilizing slopes



Each of the proposed locations should be evaluated independently and an appropriate treatment provided to ensure protection of park resources, including the water quality of University Lake and Chester Creek.

The location identified at the northern lawn should replace the area currently used to access the water approximately 50 yards to the east. This is intended to protect waterfowl and other nesting birds while maintaining water access for recreation. (See strategy 2.8)

2.4 Chester Creek Water Quality and Habitat

Objective: *Work with partner agencies to improve water quality and habitat along Chester Creek.*

Early development of the UMED District included the straightening of Chester Creek south of University Lake. In the 1980's, the creek was re-routed to flow into University Lake. However, few modifications have been made to restore Chester Creek to a more natural meandering channel.

This master plan supports the recommendation (CSF-1) of the *Chester Creek Watershed Plan* to “increase habitat diversity in stream between University Lake and Wesleyan Drive, potentially add bankfull [sic] banks to bring to a more representative cross-section area for riffles, add boulders for scour pools. This area has the potential to re-create meanders for the creek and a floodplain in undeveloped area to the north of creek”.

Reconstruction of the creek channel to improve habitat and water quality should include coordination with and funding from partner agencies such as MOA Watershed Management, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Department of Environmental Quality, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Anchorage Waterways Council.

2.5 Stormwater Runoff Control

Objective: *Utilize best management practices for stormwater management to minimize the introduction of pollutants in the future.*

University Lake receives both cooling water from ANTHC and runoff from University Lake Drive. In particular, the runoff from an University Lake Drive extension poses the potential to cause water quality problems unless it is treated appropriately prior to introduction to University Lake. Any extension to University Lake Drive should include the incorporation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality from sediments and other pollutants that are introduced from outside park boundaries.





2.6 Beavers and Tree Protection

Objective: Protect trees and other park resources to promote bank stabilization and minimize erosion.

Beavers are an integral part of the park. Active efforts to trap, eliminate, or relocate beavers will likely result in a new population of beavers moving in. However, active management is necessary to protect other park resources.



Beavers tend to prefer fast-growing tree species such as poplar, willow, cottonwood and alder.

Key trees that offer bank stabilization or become potential hazards if felled by beavers, should be protected with 2" X 4" wire mesh (or similar product) fastened at the base of the tree. Wire mesh should be a minimum of 30-40 inches height or 2 feet above average high snow level.



2.7 Conflicts between Dogs and Beavers

Objective: Implement a series of strategies to reduce/eliminate conflicts between off-leash dogs and beavers.

The south peninsula trail provides access to sensitive wildlife habitat and should be managed to balance visitor access with the protection of wildlife. Conflicts between beavers protecting their kits and off-leash dogs can be stressful to owners and result in injury or trauma to animals.

Conflicts between beavers and off-leash dogs are the result of several factors including poor wayfinding and trail designations, a lack of interpretive information highlighting the presence of sensitive wildlife habitat, and park users choosing to disregard park rules and regulations. The master plan recommends several strategies to minimize conflicts between off-leash dogs and beavers.

2.7.a) Dogs are required to be “on-leash” on the south peninsula trail.

2.7.b) Add regulatory, interpretive, and wayfinding signage to eliminate confusion, educate the public, and promote responsible use.

2.7.c) Add short section of chicane fencing and signage at intersection of off-leash trail and south peninsula trail to denote change in trail status and identify sensitive wildlife area.

2.7.d) Greater enforcement of park rules, federal and state regulations as they relate to off-leash dog use and wildlife protection.

2.8 Protecting Waterfowl Nesting Areas

Objective: Improve visitor knowledge of sensitive nesting areas and reduce conflicts between humans/dogs and wildlife.

During summer months, waterfowl nest on two small islands in University Lake. Nesting birds are protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 ASC 703 711). However, many visitors may be unaware that their actions are negatively impacting nesting birds.

The master plan proposes additional regulatory and interpretive signage to improve visitors knowledge and understanding of sensitive bird nesting habitat.

The master plan also recommends realignment of the off-leash loop trail to avoid sensitive nesting areas near



the small gravel beach on the north side of the lake. The small gravel beach was used for many years by ADF&G for fish stocking (though this activity no longer takes place) and in recent years has become a popular water access point for off-leash dogs. Realignment of the off-leash trail should be accompanied by revegetation, fencing, or other passive restraint to discourage public use in sensitive bird nesting habitat. A new water access point should be located to the west to accommodate park users who wish to access the lake.

2.9 Wildlife Corridors

Objective: Monitor development and work with neighboring institutions to ensure that wildlife corridors have minimal impediments.

University Lake Park is part of a larger network of greenspace and is an important wildlife corridor. Forest, wetlands and riparian areas provide foraging opportunities for moose, bears, and other mammals.

The master plan recommends that fencing, intended to contain off-leash dogs, should be limited to short sections of chicane fencing located at key trail intersections. Large scale fencing is not recommended. Short sections of fence will enable wildlife to move freely with minimal obstruction.

The master plan also recommends continued coordination with APU, as future development and the extension of University Lake Drive will likely involve fencing which may limit wildlife movement through the area.

2.10 Enforcement

Objective: Work with local enforcement agencies to address new and ongoing issues to ensure a safe and healthy park experience.

The Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department does not have the power to enforce park rules and must rely on local law enforcement, animal control, and federal and state wildlife managers. The Parks and Recreation Department should work with local enforcement agencies to ensure regular enforcement of park rules and to address issues as they arise.

Off-Leash Dog Park Spaces Rules and Regulations

1. Dogs must be leashed upon entering and leaving the off-leash dog park space.
2. Classified dogs and female dogs in heat are prohibited.
3. The owner or custodian of the dog must remain in the dog park space with the dog.
4. Dogs must be under control as defined in this chapter (Title 17.10.090)
5. Dog feces must be cleaned up by the dog owner or custodian.
6. Holes dug by dogs must be filled by the dog owner or custodian.
7. Owners or custodians are responsible for all actions of their dogs.



3. Trails to Support a Variety of Uses

The diversity of trail types and trail experiences at University Lake Park make the park a citywide destination. Preserving the balance of paved multi-use trails and soft-surface trails including the off-leash loop, is highly desired by members of the public. The trail system, as it exists, is to be maintained with improvements to ensure a safe and firm walking surface.

The master plan recommends a re-alignment of the multi-use trail to south of the parking lot to provide adequate separation and eliminate conflicts between off-leash dogs and bicyclists near the main kiosk. Trail re-alignment should coincide with the future reconfiguration and expansion of the parking lot to the east. The following are strategies to improve trails to support a variety of uses.

3.1 Multi-Use Trail Re-alignment

Objective: Re-align the multi-use trail south of the parking lot to eliminate conflicts between off-leash dogs and fast moving cyclists in high traffic area near main kiosk.

In its current configuration, the off-leash loop and multi-use trail converge in a high traffic area near the main kiosk. This situation creates an undesirable mix of uses and impacts to user safety. To address this issue, the master plan recommends moving the multi-use trail to the south of the parking lot.

From the Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Trail Connector roundabout, the multi-use trail should continue west to Elmore Road, connecting to a separated north-south multi-use path. To ensure the safety of trail users, the north-south trail should cross an extended driveway to the parking lot. (see page 52) This allows for better bike and pedestrian visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the parking

lot. Once the trail is re-aligned, the existing paved path leading to the kiosk and Elmore Road should become a gravel trail.

In essence, the multi-use trail at the perimeter of the park should be the only paved trail within the park. All other trails within the park are to be soft-surfaced.

3.2 Open Space

Objective: Maintain and improve the open play area north of University Lake to support park use and off-leash activity.

The open space north of the lake and east of the University Lake Drive should be graded, topsoiled, and seeded to provide a full lawn for recreation.

3.3 Soft Surface Trail Tread

Objective: Improve soft surface trails to provide a sustainable and accessible trail system to support a diverse range of recreational activities.

Existing soft surface trails are to remain as compacted earth and D-1 gravel. Trails should be upgraded as needed to ensure user safety and meet ADA requirements. Standards established under the Americans with Disabilities Act require:

- A surface that is firm and stable
- 80 inches of head room
- Tread obstacles do not exceed two inches maximum height
- Five feet in width. If three feet in width, passing spaces of five feet no more than 1000 feet apart
- Running slope not exceed 1:20 for any distance
- Maximum slope of 1:12 maximum for 200 feet, 1:10 for 30 feet, or 1:8 for 10 feet
- Where provided, edge protection to have a height of at least 3 inches
- Signage designating the trail as meeting ADA requirements

3.4 Soft Surface Trail Modifications

Objective: Remove, re-align, upgrade select segments of soft surface trails to maintain circulation, address erosion, and minimize disturbances to sensitive wildlife and habitat.

The existing network of soft surface trails are to be maintained “as is” and improved with a few notable exceptions.

3.4.a) Re-route the off-leash trail away from the shoreline, on the north side of the lake near the small island, to protect nesting bird habitat

3.4.b) Clearly mark “on-leash” and “off-leash” trails on the south peninsula, to eliminate conflicts between beavers and off-leash dogs

3.4.c) Remove the soft-surface trail connecting the off-leash loop and Elmore Road north of Chester Creek; re-vegetate to protect riparian area and improve water quality

3.4.d) Remove and re-vegetate the eroding segment of off-leash trail, south of the lake and east of the bridge, once multi-use trail is re-routed and paved segment transitions to soft-surface

3.4.e) Monitor the development of social trails over time and determine best management strategies

3.5 On Leash/Off-Leash Trail Designation

Objective: Provide clarification of off-leash versus on-leash trail designations at University Lake Park.

University Lake Park is one of Anchorage’s most popular off-leash dog park spaces. Through the public process, it was clear that public support for maintaining the park as an off-leash space far exceeded calls to remove the off-leash designation. This master plan maintains the “off-leash” trail designation for the University Lake Loop trail.

Dogs are permitted “off-leash” on the main 1.1 mile University Lake Loop trail. On all other trails, dogs must be leashed in accordance with leash laws established under Title 17 of Anchorage Municipal Code.

The designation of a trail as “off-leash” does not preclude nor give priority to one user group over another. Rather, the designation of a trail as “off-leash” simply denotes an allowable use. Further, the designation of an “off-leash” dog park space requires that the rules and regulations outlined in Title 17 (AMC 17.10.090) be followed. (see page 46)

Dogs are required to be “on-leash” on trails along the south peninsula to protect sensitive nesting areas and beaver habitat. This master plan recommends a short section of fence at trail intersections with chicane-style openings to clearly illustrate that the peninsula is a sensitive wildlife area.



4. Improve Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding at University Lake Park is not well defined and is unclear, often leaving visitors confused and leading to conflicts between user groups. Upgrading signage and wayfinding will be important to the future success of the park as a recreation area for all. Signage is to be improved, as is wayfinding, and critical areas such as bird nesting and beaver lodges should be protected by providing regulatory signage and interpretive information.

The master plan recommends a hierarchy of gateways, nodes, and wayfinding signage to clearly define trail types and use areas. Locations of these elements are illustrated on the preferred alternative and described in further detail below. The following are strategies to improve signage and wayfinding at University Lake Park

4.1 Gateways

Objective: Provide gateway features to better define University Lake Park from surrounding land uses.

“Gateways” are entrance features located at key access points to the park. They are important in defining the park as a unique destination separate from surrounding land uses.

Gateway features should be located at all major access points including: major intersections of the multi-use trail system, at the parking lot, and where private land accesses public parkland.

Gateways should feature:

- Type II or Type III Park sign
- Friendly Park Rules sign
- Off-leash Dog Park Rules sign
- Trail Map with ‘You Are Here’
- Amenities
- Wayfinding

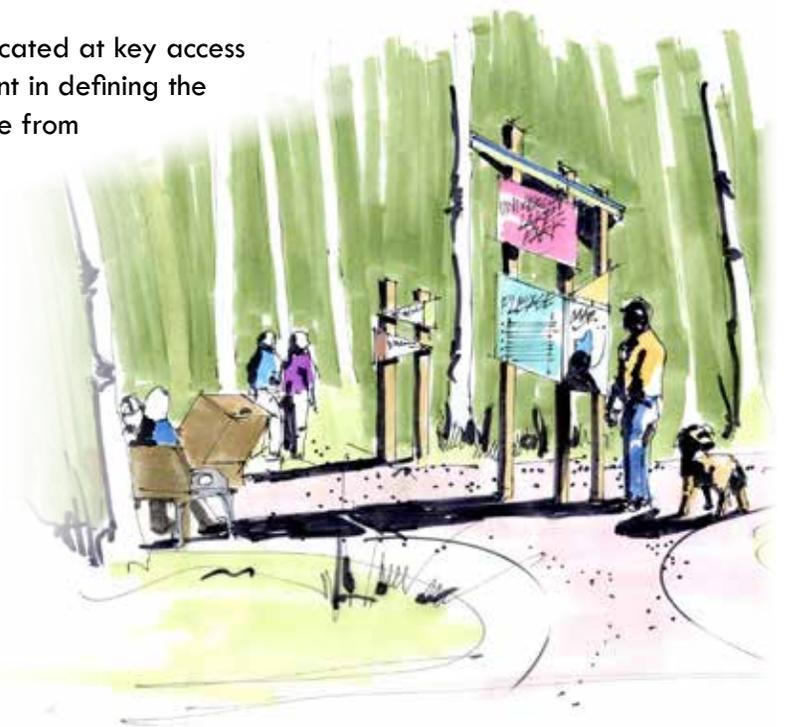


Figure 11: Illustration of a “gateway” feature

4.2 Nodes

Objective: Develop “nodes” at key trail junctions within University Lake Park to support park use.

“Nodes” are small gathering areas located at key trail intersections. Nodes include benches and other amenities providing spaces for relaxation and socializing with friends and neighbors.

Nodes should feature:

- Park Benches
- Bear-proof Trash Cans
- Mutt Mitt Stations
- Trail Map with ‘You Are Here’
- Wayfinding

4.3 Gateways with Chicane Fence

Objective: Improve safety and minimize conflicts between cyclist and off-leash dogs by installing chicane fencing at busy intersections along the multi-use trail.

Gateways along the multi-use trail should include short sections of “chicane” fencing (or similar type solution) at busy trail intersections to improve safety and better define use areas. This design solution provides greater predictability ensuring that pedestrian traffic is channeled to a single access point. A single point of access enables fast moving cyclists and other multi-use trail users to determine where crossing traffic may be present. Further, a chicane fence deters off-leash dogs from sprinting onto the multi-use trail. Signage should be provided at trail intersections as well as along the multi-use trail to alert users of the upcoming trail crossing.

4.4 Interpretive Material

Objective: Install interpretive information to increase public awareness of critical wildlife and natural resources.

Interpretive material provides public education about the importance of University Lake Park as a natural area. Interpretive materials, such as panels and signage, should be provided at key locations where sensitive wildlife habitat is threatened by interactions with people or dogs. Interpretive materials should also be provided in high impact areas along the shoreline of University Lake and Chester Creek where high use and erosion threaten water quality.

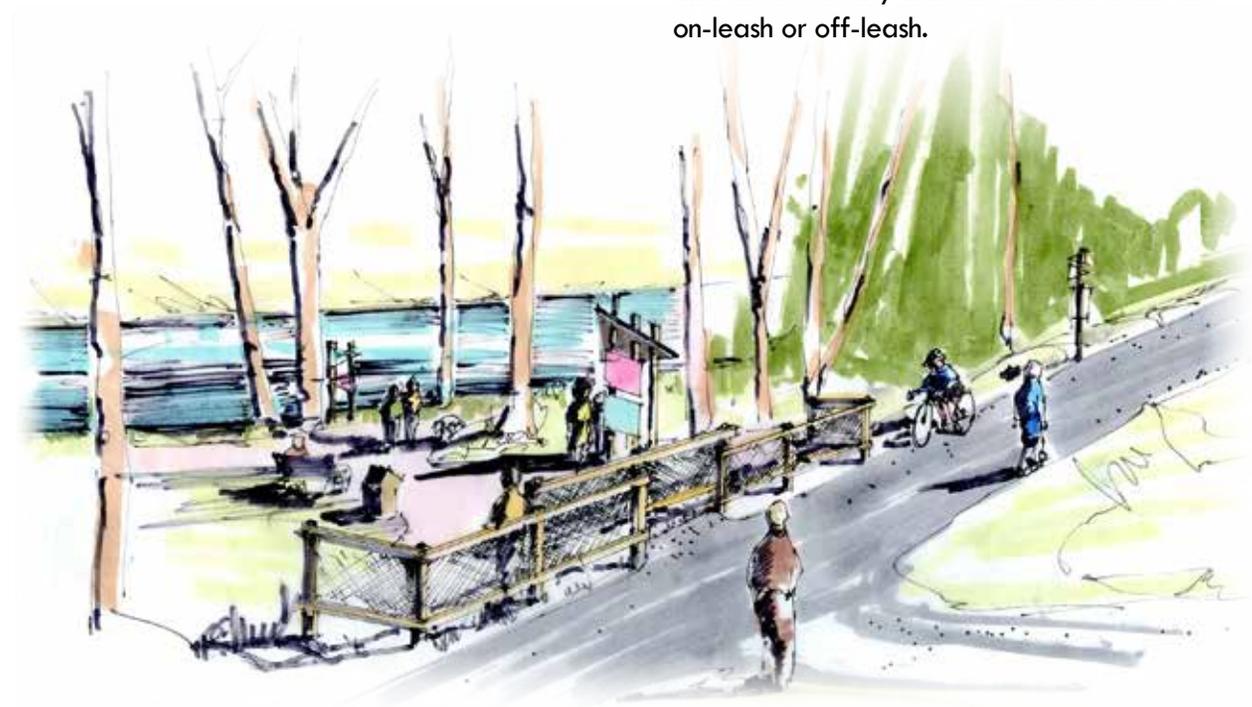


Figure 12: Illustration of a “gateway” with chicane fencing at busy trail intersection

The master plan recommends collaborating with local, state and federal wildlife managers and water quality experts to develop materials. The master plan also recommends partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide public education and funding.

4.5 Wayfinding

Objective: Provide wayfinding signage that clearly delineates trail designations and helps visitors navigate the park safely.

Wayfinding signage helps visitors safely navigate trails within the park. Wayfinding signage should be provided at all key trail intersections and should clearly indicate whether trails are on-leash or off-leash.



5. Parking to Meet Demand

Parking has been an issue at University Lake Park for many years. Limited available parking on site has resulted in park users parking on neighboring private property. Public preferences for expanding the existing parking lot off Elmore Road was considered and deliberated by the advisory group. This master plan recommends that parking be expanded to provide a total of 50 spaces. The master plan also recommends that parking be moved to the east in conjunction with the re-alignment of the multi-use trail.

5.1 Expand Parking Lot

Objective: Expand parking to meet current and future demand.

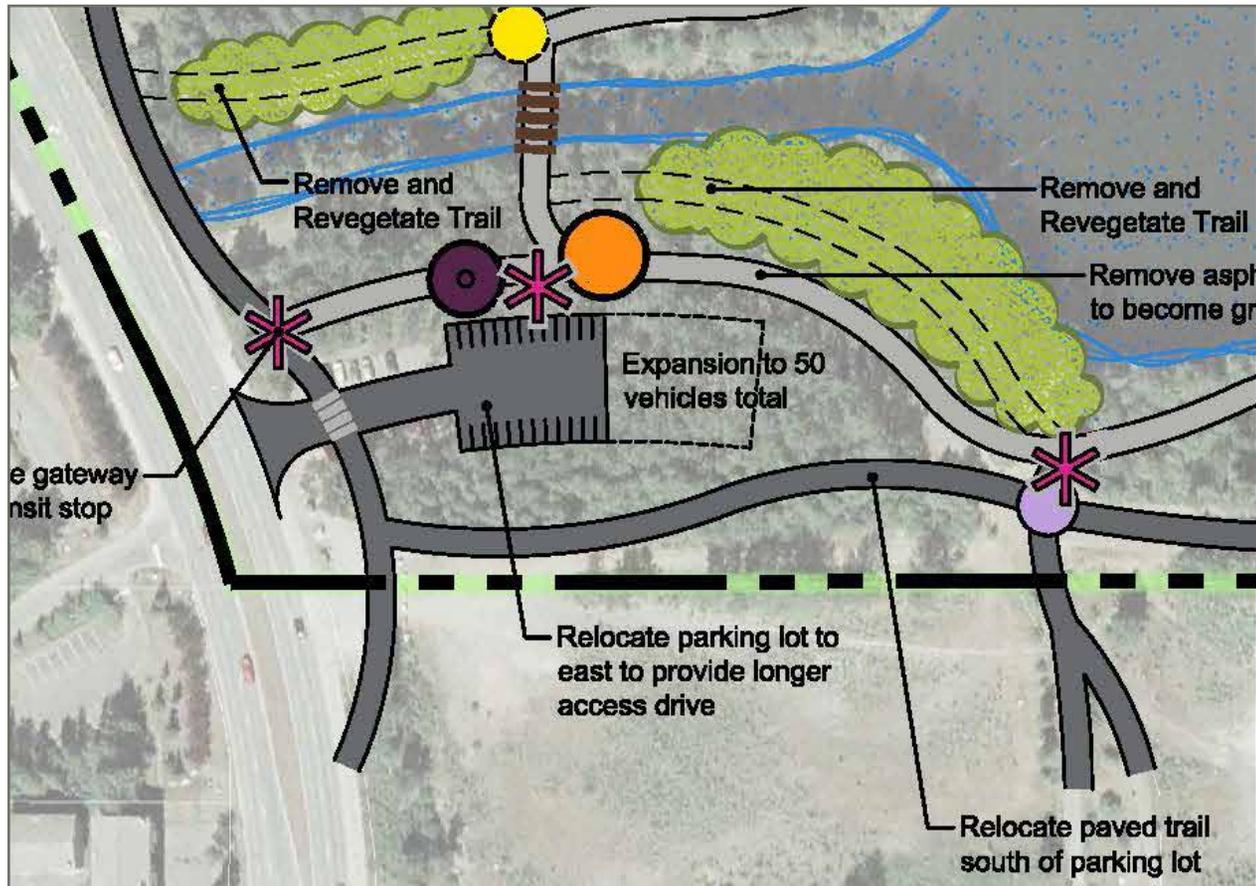
The master plan recommends that parking be expanded to accommodate vehicle demand and minimize the occurrences of park users parking on neighboring private property. Parking should be enlarged, but only at such a time that other management possibilities have been explored and parking demands are found to persist. An expansion of the existing parking lot to accommodate a total of 50 vehicles should meet the current and anticipated future demand for vehicle parking.

The parking lot should be relocated approximately 100 feet to the east to allow for a re-alignment of the multi-use trail. This would improve visibility and safety between vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot and bicyclist and pedestrian traveling along the north-south multi-use trail running along Elmore Road.

Future development of the parking lot should meet all Title 21 requirements including lighting and landscaping. The parking lot should also provide gateway elements including wayfinding and a park map, “mutt-mitt” station, friendly park rules sign, bear-proof trash receptacles, and a restroom/port-a-potty location. The parking lot should be clearly visible from Elmore Road and should be paved, with a small apron by the trailhead.

The small “overflow” parking lot south of the main parking lot should remain until the park parking lot is expanded or ANTHC develops their property.

Figure 13: Illustration of expanded parking and trail alignments



5.2 Shared Parking Agreement

Objective: Explore the option of a shared use parking agreement with neighboring properties as a least cost approach to meeting parking demand.

Another option worth exploring is the possibility of a shared use parking agreement. A shared use parking agreement would be less expensive than developing new parking by making use of available parking on neighboring properties.

As peak hours for the parks typically run opposite standard business hours, a shared use parking agreement may provide a good alternative to new parking development. It should be noted that all parties must agree on the terms of such an agreement which may prove challenging and will likely require careful negotiation to ensure that all parties are equally protected. Further, any parking agreement must be approved by the Municipal Traffic Department.



6. Maintenance and Amenities

Regular maintenance combined with the installation of new amenities make for a clean, comfortable, and enjoyable park experience. This master plan recommends regular trash pick up, the provision of restrooms, and the installation of new amenities to improve the health and appearance of University Lake Park. New amenities such as trash cans, benches, mutt mitts, kiosks, signage, wayfinding and interpretive panels should be provided at appropriate locations within the park.

Maintenance

Regular maintenance provides for a clean, healthy, and enriching park experience. New bear-proof trash cans should be installed and emptied at regular intervals to support year-round use.

6.1 Trash Pick-Up

Objective: Provide regular trash pick up to ensure a clean, safe and healthy park environment.

Off-leash dog park spaces typically require more frequent trash removal than other parks. University Lake Park is particularly challenging given the limited vehicle access and distance that maintenance crews must travel to retrieve trash.

In years past, volunteer groups such as the Friends of University Lake and Anchorage Unleashed have worked with MOA Park Maintenance to empty trash cans. The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to work with volunteer groups. This master plan recommends that trash cans be upgraded to park standard bear-proof trash cans to help minimize the occurrences of overflow.



Amenities

Amenities to improve park users experience should be added at locations identified in the master plan.

6.2 Restrooms

Objective: Provide restrooms or port-o-potties to support park use and environmental health.

Restrooms or port-a-potties should be provided at the parking lot to provide for a comfortable park experience and maintain the natural environment. If feasible, restrooms or port-a-potties should also be provided by the popular open play area on the north side of the lake near University Lake Drive. Port-a-potties should be screened by a three-sided decorative enclosure and located near vehicle access to enable servicing.

6.3 Park Benches

Objective: Install park standard benches to support park use.

Park standard benches should be installed at “node” locations identified in the preferred alternative.

6.4 Trash Cans and Mutt Mitts

Objective: Install additional trash cans and provide regular maintenance to promote waste pick up and ensure a clean, safe and healthy park environment.

A common remark heard throughout the planning process was the need for more trash cans. Bear proof trash cans and “Mutt Mitts” should be provided at identified “nodes” to support park use. Trash cans should be park standard bear proof trash receptacles and should be emptied regularly. Mutt Mitts should be either park standard or similar “bring a bag, take a bag” receptacles commonly found at off-leash areas in Anchorage. Dog owners are more likely to pick up after their pets if there are convenient locations to dispose of the waste.



CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

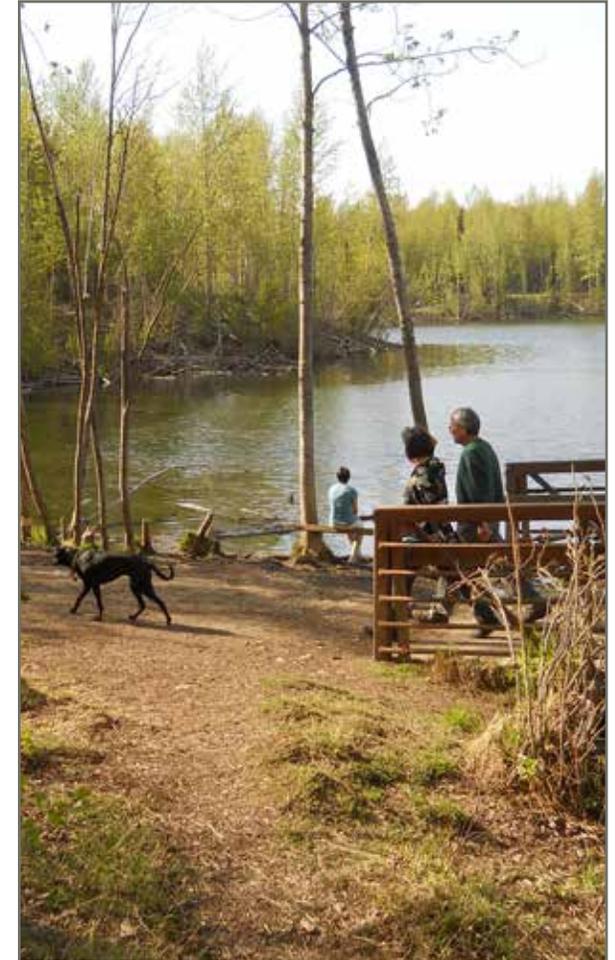
Implementation

The University Lake Master Plan does not call for extensive modifications or major new development. Rather, this master plan recommends the upgrade of existing park assets to maintain current uses combined with the protection of natural features within the park. The following section provides an implementation table and costs estimates to guide the Parks and Recreation Department over the next ten years. Implementation items reflect recommendations and strategies outlined in Chapter 4 of this master plan. These recommendations are organized into the following categories: 1) Management Actions, 2) Maintenance and Minor Construction, 3) Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) projects, and 4) Capital Projects.

The proposed improvements are estimated in 2016 construction costs to be \$817,500.

Table 14: Master Plan implementation cost estimates

Parking lot relocation	\$250,000
Trail relocation	\$200,000
Port-a-potty screens	\$7,500
Gateway structures	\$50,000
Wayfinding signage	\$30,000
Interpretive signage	\$15,000
Soft surface trail improvements	\$125,000
Shoreline re-vegetation	\$35,000
Water access matting	\$50,000
Mutt mitts	\$5,000
Trash receptacles	\$15,000
Benches	\$15,000
Fence @ Univ. Lake. Drive	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$817,500



MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

STRATEGY	1.1 Adaptive Park Management	1.2 Land Use	1.3 Future Development
OBJECTIVES	<i>Provide management and maintenance strategies that improve existing conditions and are responsive to changing preferences</i>	<i>Manage University Lake Park as a Natural Resource Area</i>	<i>Maintain the natural character of the park by focusing future development on improving/enhancing existing conditions and adding amenities to improve park users experience</i>
ONGOING	Evaluate management strategies to determine if management goals and objectives are being met	Monitor park management strategies to ensure actions are consistent with vision for a natural area	Implement the recommended strategies for future development such as developing gateways (Item 4.1) and nodes (Item 4.2), adding amenities (Items 6.3 and 6.4), improving way-finding (Item 4.5), rehabilitating natural areas (Items 2.2, 2.4, and 3.3), developing water access points (Item 2.3), protecting wildlife (Items 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9) and other strategies identified in this master plan
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	1) Develop performance standards for park management and maintenance; 2) Establish Levels of Acceptable Change		
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)		Amend the classification of University Lake Park to "Natural Resource Area" as part of the process to update the <i>Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan</i>	
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)	Evaluate management program and master plan policies to determine overall effectiveness, revise as necessary		

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

STRATEGY	2.1 Education and Outreach	2.5 Stormwater Runoff Control	2.10 Enforcement
OBJECTIVES	<p><i>Improve park users understanding of the natural environment, watershed health, wildlife, and the impacts of dog waste on water quality</i></p>	<p><i>Utilize best management practices for stormwater management to minimize the introduction of pollutants in the future</i></p>	<p><i>Work with local enforcement agencies to address new and ongoing issues to ensure a safe and healthy park experience</i></p>
ONGOING	<p>Work with partner organizations to develop educational materials and conduct outreach</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitor development in the area around University Lake Park and work to reduce the impacts of stormwater on water quality; 2) Promote best management practices 	<p>Work with Animal Control and APD to ensure park rules and regulations are enforced and address issues as they arise</p>
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	<p>Work with ADF&G, USFWS, Anchorage Waterways Council, Anchorage Unleashed and other non-profit partners to develop education and outreach materials and to sponsor events</p>	<p>Coordinate with University Lake Drive Extension project manager and MOA Watershed Management to ensure that best management practices for stormwater runoff are in place</p>	<p>Meet with APD and Animal Control to identify issues and develop strategies to improve enforcement within University Lake Park</p>
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)			
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)			

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

<p>STRATEGY</p>	<p>4.4 Interpretive Material</p>	<p>5.2 Shared Use Parking Agreement</p>	<p>6.2 Restrooms</p>
<p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><i>Install interpretive information to increase public awareness of critical wildlife and natural resources</i></p>	<p><i>Explore the option of a shared use parking agreement with neighboring properties as a least cost approach to meeting parking demand</i></p>	<p><i>Provide restrooms or port-o-potties to support park use and environmental health</i></p>
<p>ONGOING</p>			<p>Maintain restrooms/port-o-potties to ensure cleanliness</p>
<p>SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)</p> <p>⋮</p>	<p>Work with ADF&G, USFWS, Anchorage Waterways Council, Anchorage Park Foundation and other non-profit partners to fundraise, develop and install interpretive signage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet with ANHC to determine feasibility of a shared use parking agreement 2) If feasible, formalize agreement and seek approval 3) Create signage to notify park users of availability of parking 4) Develop trail connection to parking to facilitate access. <p><i>* If no agreement, pursue parking lot expansion (Item 5.1)</i></p>	<p><u>Main Parking Lot</u>: Provide restrooms or port-o-potties with decorative screening at parking lot</p> <p><u>University Lake Drive</u>: Provide restrooms or port-o-potties with decorative screening near open play area and entrance of University Lake Drive, if feasible, depending on future development University Lake Drive extension</p>
<p>MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)</p> <p>⋮</p>			
<p>LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)</p>			

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

STRATEGY			
OBJECTIVES			
ONGOING			
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)			
↓			
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)			
↓			
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)			

MAINTENANCE AND MINOR CONSTRUCTION

STRATEGY	<p>2.7 Conflicts Between Dogs and Beavers</p>	<p>2.8 Protect Waterfowl Nesting Areas</p>	<p>2.9 Wildlife Corridors</p>
OBJECTIVES	<p><i>Implement a series of strategies to reduce/eliminate conflicts between off-leash dogs and beavers.</i></p>	<p><i>Improve visitor knowledge of sensitive nesting areas and reduce conflicts between humans/dogs and wildlife</i></p>	<p><i>Monitor development and work with neighboring institutions to ensure that wildlife corridors have minimal impediments</i></p>
ONGOING	<p>Enforce park rules, federal and state regulations as they relate to off-leash dog use and wildlife protection (Item 2.10)</p>	<p>Enforce park rules, federal and state regulations as they relate to off-leash dog use and wildlife protection (Item 2.10)</p>	<p>Enforce park rules, federal and state regulations as they relate to wildlife protection (Item 2.10);</p>
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	<p><u>Strategies:</u></p> <p>2.7.a) Require dogs to be “on-leash” on the south peninsula trail</p> <p>2.7.b) Install regulatory, interpretive, and wayfinding signage to eliminate confusion, educate the public and promote responsible use</p>	<p>Work with ADF&G, USFWS, Anchorage Waterways Council, Anchorage Park Foundation and other agency and non-profit partners to fundraise, develop and install interpretive signage (Item 4.4)</p>	<p>Work with neighboring institutions to ensure that wildlife corridors have minimal impediments</p>
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)	<p>2.7.c) Add short sections of chicane fencing and signage at intersection of off-leash trail and south peninsula trail to denote change in trail status and identify sensitive wildlife area</p>	<p>Re-align off-leash trail north of the lake to protect waterfowl nesting areas</p>	
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)			

MAINTENANCE AND MINOR CONSTRUCTION

<p>STRATEGY</p>	<p>3.5 On Leash/Off Leash Trail Designation</p>	<p>4.1 Gateways</p>	<p>4.2 Nodes</p>
<p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><i>Provide clarification of “off-leash” versus “on-leash” trail designations at University Lake Park</i></p>	<p><i>Provide gateway features to better define University Lake Park from surrounding land uses</i></p>	<p><i>Develop “nodes” at key trail junctions within University Lake Park to support park use</i></p>
<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>Work with partner organizations to develop educational materials and conduct outreach (Item 2.1)</p>		
<p>SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)</p> <p>⋮</p>	<p>Install regulatory signage and wayfinding that clearly delineate “on-leash” and “off-leash” areas (Item 4.5)</p>		<p>Install amenities such as benches, bear-proof trash cans, mutt mitt stations, trail map with “you are here” and wayfinding signage at key trail intersections</p>
<p>MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)</p> <p>⋮</p>		<p>Design and install gateways at all major access points to better delineate park boundaries and define the park as a special place</p>	
<p>LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)</p>			

MAINTENANCE AND MINOR CONSTRUCTION

STRATEGY	4.3 Gateways with Chicane Fence	4.5 Wayfinding	6.1 Trash Pick Up
OBJECTIVES	<i>Improve safety and minimize conflicts between cyclist and off-leash dogs by installing chicane fencing at busy intersections along the multi-use trail</i>	<i>Provide wayfinding signage that clearly delineates trail designations and helps visitors navigate the park safely</i>	<i>Provide regular trash pick up to ensure a clean, safe and healthy park environment</i>
ONGOING		Monitor park usage to determine effectiveness of signage and wayfinding system	Provide regular trash pick up consistent with park use
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	Design and install gateways with chicane fence at identified trail intersections along multi-use trail and south peninsula trail to better delineate use areas	1) Develop a wayfinding plan for University Lake Park; 2) Install kiosks and wayfinding signage that clearly delineates trail designations, property boundaries, and landmarks (Item 3.5)	Install bear-proof trash cans; Meet with volunteer groups to discuss feasibility of providing trash pick up; Establish performance standards; Integrate standards into maintenance practices
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)			
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)			

MAINTENANCE AND MINOR CONSTRUCTION

STRATEGY	6.3 Park Benches	6.4 Trash Cans and Mutt Mitts	
OBJECTIVES	<i>Install park standard benches to support park use</i>	<i>Install additional trash cans and provide regular maintenance to promote waste pick up and ensure a clean, safe and healthy park environment.</i>	
ONGOING		Work with P&R maintenance and non-profit user groups to ensure regular maintenance	
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS) ↓	Install park benches in conjunction with development of nodes	Install bear-proof trash cans and mutt-mitt stations at gateways and nodes; Install signage and conduct outreach to encourage waste pick up	
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS) ↓			
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)			

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS (YEP) PROJECTS

STRATEGY	<p>2.2 Restoration & Revegetation</p>	<p>2.6 Beavers and Tree Protection</p>	<p>3.3 Soft Surface Trail Tread</p>
OBJECTIVES	<p><i>Rehabilitate shoreline and streambank areas impacted by erosion to improve water quality and habitat</i></p>	<p><i>Protect trees and other park resources to promote bank stabilization and minimize erosion</i></p>	<p><i>Improve soft surface trails to provide a sustainable and accessible trail system to support a diverse range of recreational activities</i></p>
ONGOING	<p>Monitor restoration efforts regularly to ensure success, address additional areas as needed</p>	<p>Monitor beaver activity at the park and the impacts on water quality and hydrology; Address areas as needed</p>	<p>Monitor use and wear on soft surface trails and address as needed;</p>
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coordinate with ADF&G, USFWS, MOA Watershed, and Anchorage Waterways Council to identify priority areas and strategies for restoration; 2) Schedule into YEP work program; 3) Install plantings and fabric in identified areas; 4) Protect plantings with temporary fencing; 5) Wrap trees threatened by beavers with mesh. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coordinate with ADF&G, USFWS to identify areas and best management strategies; 2) Schedule into YEP work program; 3) Wrap trees threatened by beavers with mesh or other preferred method 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify and prioritize problem areas 2) Develop scope of work 3) Schedule into YEP program 4) Install fabric/gravel
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)			
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)			

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS (YEP) PROJECTS

STRATEGY	3.4 Soft Surface Trail Modifications		
OBJECTIVES	<p><i>Remove, re-align, upgrade select segments of soft surface trails to maintain circulation, address erosion, and minimize disturbances to sensitive wildlife and habitat.</i></p>		
ONGOING	<p>Monitor the development of social trails over time, address as needed</p>		
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS) 	<p>3.4.c) Remove and re-vegetate soft surface trail north of Chester Creek connecting Elmore Rd and the off-leash loop to help protect riparian areas along Chester Creek</p>		
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS) 	<p>3.4.a) Re-route the off-leash trail away from the shoreline on the north side of the lake in coordination with the development of a new water access point (Item 2.3);</p>		
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)	<p>3.4.d) Remove and re-vegetate the eroding segment of off-leash trail, south of the lake and east of the bridge, in combination with the re-aligning of the multi-use trail (item 3.1)</p>		

CAPITAL PROJECTS

<p>STRATEGY</p>	<p>2.3 Water Access for Recreation</p>	<p>2.4 Chester Creek Water Quality and Habitat</p>	<p>3.1 Multi-Use Trail Realignment</p>
<p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><i>Provide designated access points to University Lake to support recreation and minimize widespread trampling and erosion</i></p>	<p><i>Work with partner agencies to improve water quality and habitat along Chester Creek</i></p>	<p><i>Re-align the multi-use trail south of the parking lot to eliminate conflicts between off-leash dogs and fast moving cyclist in high traffic area near main kiosk</i></p>
<p>ONGOING</p>	<p>Monitor water access and potential impacts on wildlife and water quality; address as needed</p>	<p>Work with partners to monitor water quality in University Lake and Chester Creek; address issues as needed</p>	
<p>SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)</p> <p>⋮</p>	<p>1) Coordinate with partner organizations identify best approach to developing water access for recreation;</p> <p>2) Generate cost estimates and concept plans;</p> <p>3) Develop language for bond proposition and/or apply for grant funding</p>	<p>Restore and revegetate shoreline and stream-bank areas to improve water quality and habitat (Item 2.2)</p>	
<p>MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)</p> <p>⋮</p>	<p>4) Construct water access points and restore eroded shoreline areas (Item 2.2)</p>		<p>Develop concept plans and cost estimate for bond proposition and/or grant funding</p>
<p>LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)</p> <p>↓</p>		<p>Work with partners such as MOA Watershed Management, ADF&G, ADEC, DNR, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Anchorage Waterways Council to implement recommendations identified in the Chester Creek Watershed Plan</p>	<p>Re-align trail in coordination with parking lot expansion (Item 5.1)</p>

CAPITAL PROJECTS

STRATEGY	<p>3.2 Open Space</p>	<p>5.1 Expand Parking Lot</p>	
OBJECTIVES	<p><i>Maintain and improve the open play area north of University Lake to support park use and off-leash activity</i></p>	<p><i>Expand parking to meet current and future demand</i></p>	
ONGOING		<p>Monitor parking to determine demand and need for parking</p>	
SHORT TERM (1-3 YEARS)	<p>Develop concept plans and cost estimate for bond proposition and/or grant funding</p>		
MID-TERM (3-5 YEARS)	<p>Improve open space area in coordination with the University Lake Drive extension project or the development of water access point (Item 2.3)</p>	<p>Develop concept plans and cost estimate for bond proposition and/or grant funding</p>	
LONG TERM (5 YEARS +)		<p>Develop parking lot in coordination with multi-use trail re-alignment (Item 3.1)</p>	

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Planning and Policy Review Documents

The planning team reviewed a number of planning and policy documents to provide context and ensure conformance with adopted plans. This appendix includes summaries of relevant planning documents as well as Municipal Ordinances and Land Uses documents.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Themes

The project team interviewed stakeholders representing community interests, user groups and neighboring institutions. This section includes ten common stakeholder interview themes that were used to identify issues and help guide the master planning and public involvement process.

Appendix C: Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

The planning team hosted three meetings with an advisory group. This appendix provides a summary of advisory group meetings and discussions.

Appendix D: Public Meeting Input

The planning team hosted two meetings open to the general public. This appendix includes a summary of comments and input from the first public meeting as well as public preferences for design and management solutions from the second public meetings.

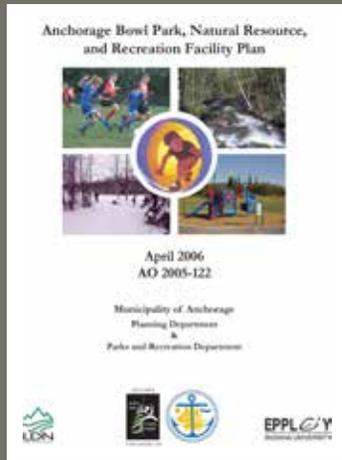
Appendix E: Resolutions

This section includes resolutions from the University Area Community Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Planning and Zoning Commission.



Appendix A: Planning and Policy Review Documents

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Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan
Municipality of Anchorage, Planning Department & Parks and Recreation (2006)

Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan (2006)

The *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource, and Recreation Facility Plan* is an element of the *Anchorage 2020 - Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan*. The *Park Plan* establishes standards for levels of service, and makes specific recommendations based on the needs of park districts in the Anchorage Bowl. University Lake Park is located within the “Northeast” park district.

The *Park Plan* categorizes parks, facilities, and open space by size, function and use. University Lake Park is classified primarily as a Natural Resource Use Area. Of the 64 acres making up University Lake Park, 57.6 acres are classified as Natural Resource Use and 6.4 acres as Community Use.

Natural Resource Use Areas are defined as “lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics or buffering”. These areas provide critical habitat for wildlife, buffers between different land uses, and link neighborhoods, parks, and schools. Natural features found in these areas include wetlands, streams, riparian zones and other areas that provide habitat or serve a natural function.

Natural Resource Use Areas are divided into three categories: 1) Natural Resource Preservation Land, 2) Natural Resource Conservation Land, and 3) Natural Resource Reserve Land.

The *Park Plan* shows Chester Creek and University Lake as Natural Resource Preservation Areas (Map 6). These water features perform import-

Natural Resource Use Area

Function and Recreational Uses: Access, trails, natural appreciation, interpretation, and education; minimal resource impact; trail development and greenbelts as linkages for system; potential visitor attractions that focus on nature and interpretation.

Managed Condition: Access ways maintained, trailheads and trail maintenance, minimal formal areas, lighting (low levels) where appropriate, minimal alterations to land; restoration of natural environment may be desirable with emphasis on use of native plant material.

ant environmental functions and have high ecological values. The remainder of the park, as illustrated, is classified as Natural Resource Conservation Areas. These areas consist primarily of forest and open space and provide important wildlife habitat, visual/noise buffer, and stormwater management. The *Park Plan* establishes Natural Resource Use Areas as an official park classification; however, defers to future master planning processes to determine the final designation of Natural Resource Use Areas.

The Park Plan also classifies 6.4 acres of University Lake Park as Community Use. However, supporting maps and text do not specifically delineate which areas of University Lake Park are designated Community Use (Map 3).

University Lake Park also has important Trails and Connectors identified in the Park Plan. The most notable is the major multi-use Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Connector Trail, commonly referred to as the “Tour Trail”.

The Park Plan identifies issues and needs and makes the following recommendations:

- Access through the University-Medical District should be improved
- University Lake Park: upgrade existing facilities
- The primary natural resource in the area is the Chester Creek Greenbelt. This drainage way is heavily used with development along most areas of the creek. The water quality should be monitored and drainages into the area acquired and protected.
- University Park: improve off leash area, develop play area, picnic area, play field, and parking

Natural Resource Use Area Designations

Natural Resource Preservation Land: Those areas that perform important environmental functions and have high ecological values. This includes streams, associated riparian zones and stream-bank setbacks, flood hazard areas, Class A and B wetlands, seismic hazard zones, steep slopes in excess of 15 percent, lands with conservation easements and other restrictions and any other lands determined to have unique or endangered habitat values. These lands should be permanently dedicated as Natural Resource Preservation Lands.

Natural Resource Conservation Land: Those areas with significant natural vegetation, that perform storm water management, habitat, visual or noise buffer, or other natural function important to the community.

Natural Resource Reserve Land: Those areas that retain most of their natural vegetation, perform a variety of natural functions found throughout the Anchorage Bowl, but that have features that make development for public use possible with limited costs and minimal disturbance to the surrounding ecosystem.



UMED District Plan
Municipality of Anchorage, Long-Range
Planning Department (2016)

UMED District Plan

The 2016 *UMED District Plan* is a land use plan intended to assess current needs and guide future growth and development in the University-Medical District. The University-Medical District is the second largest employment center in the region and includes two universities, major medical institutions, residential and commercial development. (p.18) The 2016 *UMED District Plan* is an update to the 2003 University and Medical District Framework Master Plan.

A major theme of the *UMED District Plan* is the challenge of balancing growth and change with the preservation of important natural resources. As the UMED District continues to grow, there will be increased pressure on natural resource areas as institutions develop lands identified in their master plans. To balance this, the *UMED District Plan* calls for compatible development adjacent to natural areas and improved management of park and natural resources. (p.22) More specifically, the *UMED District Plan* cites the need to balance “land management, allowed uses, and watershed protection”. (p.25)

The *UMED District Plan* identifies a University Lake Park Master Plan as one of the top seven plan priorities. (p.3) While the *UMED District Plan* recognizes the importance of parks and the natural environment, it also highlights issues as they relate to park management and uses. The *UMED District Plan* cites “ongoing issues regarding off-leash dogs” and the impacts to wildlife, private property, and natural resources as needing to be addressed through a University Lake Park Master Plan. The *UMED District Plan* also identifies the “need for adequate parking, public education, and management” of important recreation resources including University Lake Park. (p.22)

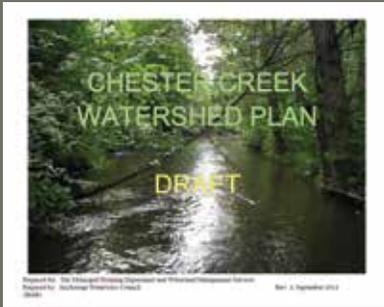
The *UMED District Plan* makes the following recommendations for University Lake Park: (p.57)

Goals: Develop and implement park management plans for University and Goose lake parks within the UMED District

Implementation: Fund and implement the University Lake and Goose Lake Master Plans that encourage uses and activities compatible with their natural setting and value, address the adverse impacts of park activities on neighboring property owners, and promote these sites as special community amenities.

Consider the following issues, projects and mitigation when completing the park master plans:

- Implementation of restoration projects within the UMED District to improve fish habitat
- Improve the shoreline of University Lake in a few select locations to allow safe access and visibility while preserving water quality and natural wildlife and plant habitat surrounding the lake.
- Provide designated access points to University and Goose lakes and nearby trails by providing adequate parking and trail maintenance to prevent damage to the environment and prevent adverse impacts for neighboring property owners.
- Incorporate information and recommendations from the Chester Creek Watershed Management Plan into the master planning process.
- Develop an interim and long-term program to end conflicts and safety issues between off-leash dogs, trail users, and neighboring property owners.
- Coordinate with and support creek restoration projects related to drainage practices around University Lake.
- Address scenarios of human and animal wildlife conflicts with the UMED District, such as those that occur between dogs and beavers near the District's lakes.
- Consider prohibiting off-leash dogs at University Lake and Goose Lake.
- Prepare Habitat Preservation and Enhancement Design Guidelines for restoration of wildlife habitats.
- Determine options for providing sufficient parking spaces and parking management at University Lake Park.
- Identify action items to minimize human/animal conflicts and to protect watershed health.



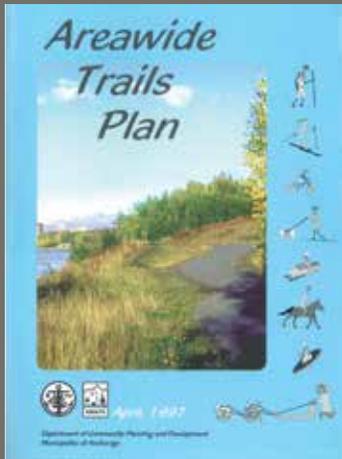
Chester Creek Watershed Plan
Prepared for: Municipality of Anchorage,
Planning Department & Watershed Man-
agement Services
Prepared by: Anchorage Waterways
Council (2014)

Chester Creek Watershed Plan

The Chester Creek Watershed Management Plan addresses issues confronting the Chester Creek Watershed and provides both general and specific actions to improve the creek's water quality. University Lake, and the portions of Chester Creek lying within University Lake Park are part of the South (Lower) Fork of Chester Creek. The plan identifies seven goals for the watershed and four "restoration priority locations" specific University Lake Park:

- Goal 1 – WATER QUALITY: Meet State standards for water quality in Chester Creek.
- Goal 2 – WATER QUANTITY: Return Chester Creek to a more natural hydrologic regime.
- Goal 3 – WILDLIFE HABITAT: Provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife along Chester Creek.
- Goal 4 – FISH HABITAT: Provide for healthy fish and other aquatic organism populations in Chester Creek.
- Goal 5 – SOCIAL and ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: Foster a high degree of social and economic opportunities.
- Goal 6 – COMMUNICATION and COORDINATION: To have a highly involved and dedicated community and municipality in maintaining the health of Chester Creek.
- Goal 7 – DATA ACQUISITION: Improve our understanding of the watershed.

- CSF-1:** **Location:** South Fork - University Lake and Wesleyan Drive
Issue: Creek is over-widened and straight with little habitat diversity as it is a rerouted section of creek to fill University Lake
Action Item: Increase habitat diversity in stream between University Lake and Wesleyan Drive, potentially add bankfull banks to bring to a more representative cross-section area for riffles, add boulders for scour pools. This area has the potential to re-create meanders for the creek and a floodplain in undeveloped area to the north of creek.
- CSF-3:** **Location:** South Fork at inlet to University Lake
Issue: Low flow issues over sediment delta at creek inlet to lake, potentially exacerbated when Chester was rerouted into the lake, causing significant erosion upstream.
Action Item: Remove sediment from inlet, create sediment trap to capture estimated additional sediment from further bank erosion, narrow creek mouth downstream of bridge, consider habitat diversification in eroded section of channel.
- CSF-4:** **Location:** South Fork at University Lake
Issue: Dog park introduction of fecal coliform into lake and trampling of lakeshore is high.
Action Item: Create directed access to lake and maintain vegetated buffer outside of access areas, restore vegetated buffer in impacted locations.
- CSF-24:** **Location: South Fork at lakes and bogs**
Issue: No education signage for public
Action Item: Install kiosks at University Lake, Baxter Bog, Cheney Lake.



Areawide Trails Plan
Municipality of Anchorage, Department
of Community Planning and Development
(1997)

Areawide Trails Plan

Identifies the Chester Creek-Campbell Creek Trail Connector as a “planned” Multi-Use Paved Trail. (Plan Map) Has been completed since the plan was developed in 1996.

- A system of bicycle routes that allow commuting by bicycles throughout the Municipality should be provided. (p74)

Design Standards (also see 2013 MOA PM&E Design Criteria Manual - Chapter 4 Pathways and Trails)

- Bike and equestrian trails shall be designed to accommodate movement at greater speeds, volumes of users, and user types. Their alignment concerns, such as sight distance and horizontal curve radii, are more critical on bike and equestrian trails (p81)
- The standard required stopping sight distance on flat surfaces shall be 125 feet for pedestrian or bicycle trails. This standard is the same as the adopted Oregon standard that is based on the speed of the fastest bicycle. (p81)
- Intersections shall be a horn configuration (at right angles) for almost all trail types. This shall be especially true where conflicting trail types intersect. (p82)
- Paved multi-use trails are typically 8-10 feet wide and unpaved trails should have a minimum width of five feet. (p85)

Municipality of Anchorage Code of Ordinances and Land Use

Book 1357 Page 0285 1985 recorded agreement granting the Municipality of Anchorage a “public use and access easement“ to APU lands north of University Lake

Plat 85-0299 Recorded Plat SW17376 Grid Map; SW 1/4 Sec27 T13N R3W (Jan. 21, 2015)

AO NO. 2011-20 Anchorage Ordinance authorizing the relinquishment of the 1985 “public use and access easement“ to APU lands in exchange for a smaller replacement park and trail easement

AO NO. 2003-108(S) Anchorage Ordinance amending Title 17 (adding a new section 17.10.090) to allow for six off-leash dog park spaces including University Lake Park

AO NO. 2004-086 Anchorage Ordinance amending Title 17 to allow for additional rules and regulations governing off-leash dog park spaces under 17.10.090

AO NO. 2004-121 Anchorage Ordinance re-adopting Title 17.10.090 and formalizing off-leash dog park spaces in Municipal Code

Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Themes

In Spring 2015, the project team interviewed stakeholders representing community interests, user groups and neighboring institutions. Based on the information collected during these interviews, ten common themes were derived. The following ten themes summarize the common stakeholder interview themes and were used to guide the master planning and public involvement process.

“Created Natural Amenity”



In the 1980s, Chester Creek was routed through an old gravel pit to create Behm Lake (now University Lake). In the years that followed, an organization called “Friends of University Lake” was formed that mobilized agencies, scout troops, and volunteers to help enhance

the site as a “Native Plant and Animal Reserve” (1995 Concept Plan image, above). University Lake Park today is a great example of how a site can be re-claimed to become a beloved and scenic park.

“Parking, Fences, and Neighbors”



University Lake Park’s recreational uses occasionally bleed over onto adjacent parcels creating added burdens for neighboring property owners. Along APU property, signage and fencing has helped address some overlapping use. While the

addition of signage and enforcement of towing has reduced park-related parking on ANMC property Yet, until the park provides sufficient parking, this will remain a challenge. Also, although “good fences make good neighbors” (such as along the hotel property) they pose a problem for wildlife and can reduce the aesthetic, natural feel of the site.

“Off-Leash Attraction”



Since 2003, University Lake Park has been a regional attraction for dog walkers. Of the six designated off-leash dog parks in Anchorage, University Lake park is the most heavily used, especially by dogs and their owners who enjoy socialization, play, and a variety of terrain. The

combination of soft-tread trails, forest, scenic views, water, and the ability to loop around the lake is valued by dog owners who visit the park in all seasons.

“Access, Circulation, & Connectivity”



University Lake Park’s central location make it easily accessible by bike, on foot and by car. Nearby neighbors and UMED employees tend to arrive on foot. While parking is provided for those arriving by car. For trail users and commuters, the park has strong

connectivity to a whole network of local and regional trails. Circulation within the park includes through traffic on multi-use trails, with slowly circulating traffic around the lake and on side paths. An important safety concern is managing where these activities overlap.

“High Volumes of Traffic”



With its mix of trails and central location, University Lake Park is one of Anchorage’s most heavily visited parks. Regular users include bike commuters, residents, UMED employees, dog walkers, students, and kids who attend summer day camps. Added to the

mix are occasional users, including patients and family members associated with nearby medical campuses; hotel visitors, and tourists. Many park users note that higher activity levels are an asset because they make the park safer and more vibrant.

“U-MED: Continued Growth”



Campuses and institutions surrounding the park are visibly growing and developing their land, often in line with adopted long-term master plans. In the future, increased development will make University Lake Park’s 64-acres of remaining green space ever more

valuable, both for people and as habitat. Future park use could significantly increase as: 1) New activity generators bring more people to the district; 2) Adjacent APU endowment lands are built-out; and 3) Road extensions (U Lake Dr. and Bragaw) create more traffic through the area.

“The Lake and Water”



University Lake is the premier park attraction. Park users often walk multiple times around the same lake loop trail in preference to out-and-back trail mileage. Others come to sit by the lake to enjoy the view and fresh air. Dogs and kids enjoy the lake and often play

right along the water’s edge. All of this however, takes a toll. Bank erosion, reduced water quality, and conflicts with aquatic wildlife (especially Beavers and Grebes) are serious and growing concerns that will only intensify as use grows.

“Dogs will be Dogs”



Although the city has clear guidelines to protect public safety and govern “off-leash” dog park spaces, animal behavior is often unpredictable. Some dog breeds have an innate prey drive and are inclined to chase wildlife or other dogs. Dogs with poor socialization or dogs

that are easily excited can also create problems. Because of this, off-leash dogs add an element of the unknown to a public park. Some people like this aspect of University Lake Park, and believe that socialization makes for a better behaved dog population. Others would rather have a predictable park experience and not allow dogs off-leash.

“People will be People”



A lot of good people are using University Lake Park and are helping to maintain it. A number of dog walkers, for instance regularly pick up others’ pet waste and garbage. For years, volunteers with “Friends of University Lake” maintained trash cans and dog waste

stations. Unfortunately, there are “bad apples,” who disregard rules and common courtesy. Some individuals may feel that it is someone else’s responsibility to pick up waste. Due to social and human complexities, changing these behaviors can be challenging without strict enforcement, design, and education.

“A Lot of Opinions”



University Lake’s level of use and popularity are an indication that the park, in its current form, is getting something right. Yet when asked to consider the park’s future or propose improvements, diverse opinions emerge - no organization speaks with a unified voice for park

users. Some think that “with all its rustic character the park is perfect as it is,” while others think “the park is an embarrassment and should be cleaned up with proper infrastructure and beautification.” In planning for the future it will be important to balance a diverse range of community opinions and needs.

Appendix C: Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

The planning team hosted three meetings with an advisory group. The role of the advisory group was to help guide the development of the master plan and to ensure that improvements identified in the master plan align with the desires of the community. The following pages provide a summary of advisory group meetings and discussions.

University Lake Park Master Plan Advisory Group #1 Meeting Summary

11:30 am - 1:00 pm Wednesday, September 9, 2015 ANTHC

Attendees:

Advisory Group Members:

Hannah Davis, UACC
Kayla Epstein, Anchorage Unleashed
Ben Hahn, APU
Mark Fitch, Bike Commuter
Lonnie Mansell, UAA
Kimberly Olmsted, Park Neighbor
Jim Sipman, Friends of University Lake
Ryan Toohey, Park Neighbor, USGS employee
David Battle, ADF&G Wildlife Coordinator
Marilyn Houser, Anchorage Waterways Council
Jeff Urbanus, MOA Water Quality
Michelle Weston, ANTHC

Project Team:

Steve Rafuse, MOA Parks
Dwayne Adams, Earthscape
Sara Wilson Doyle, Stantec
Matt McMillan, Stantec

Overview Notes:

The initial advisory group meeting began with a thank you, introductions, and an initial overview of the project goal, meeting objectives, agenda, and ground rules. Next, a powerpoint and handouts were used to present the planning process and timeline, University Lake Park history, and findings specific to stakeholder interviews and site analyses.

Brainstorming

Participants were asked to each express their own 20-year vision for the development, management and maintenance of University Lake Park. Major elements of the vision that were shared include:

Water Access & Quality – University Lake and Chester Creek key park attractions. There is strong interest in retaining some access to the water (including for dogs), and at the same time to deal with erosion and enhance water quality (ideally to a standard that allows for safe swimming by people,). There is also a continued desire by Alaska Pacific University (APU) to use the park's waterways as a natural learning laboratory/ classroom for environmental sciences and stewardship.

Greenspace & Natural Character – Over the next 20 years, retain University Lake Park in as natural of a condition as possible. This includes retaining and enhancing the park's vegetation, and to the extent possible, limiting paving and lighting. Use soft tread trails where possible help disperse people and dogs in the park, and create new dog parks in Anchorage help shift and disperse off-leash uses throughout the community. This will help the park continue to serve the community primarily as a valued greenspace in contrast to the U-Med area, which will continue to build out.

Maintenance & Amenities – University Lake Park ideally will be maintained by the Municipality and Volunteers to a high standard, and include just the right mix of basic amenities to support users (lots of trash cans, benches, signage, and interpretation). This helps keep the park clean and attractive even as use levels grow, and fosters a culture among users of respect and stewardship for the park.

Parking – Parking for park users is not currently proportionate to demand, but there is the hope that over 20 years, U-Med becomes more of a pedestrian and transit-oriented district, with the park primarily accessed on foot or by bike. That said, some additional parking may be beneficial to the park in the near term, and within a limited footprint that retains the overall natural character of the park. There is also a desire to negotiate for some off-site parking for users (on adjacent campuses and private properties) in a compatible arrangement.

Bicycle Commuting – The multi-use trail component of the park supports a lot of people commuting in and out of the area, and through a larger system. Over 20 years, the multi-use trail is retained in the park, and considered as a part of the whole network, with some refinements and enhancements to improve safety and reduce conflicts between through traffic and park users.

User Education & Notification – University Lake Park is what it is today because of users and volunteers who have invested in protecting and re-vegetating the park. In the future there is a desire to use education, signage, bulletin boards, interpretation, training, and other tools to their full effect and create a culture of respect by users, both for the park, and for other park users and user types.

Air Quality – Due to adjacent smoke free campuses, the park is currently attracting smokers right along the multi-use trail. There is a desire to resolve this issue in a collaborative but sensitive manner that shifts or stops this use, to improve air quality.

Wildlife – The park is home to diverse wildlife that are valued. There is a desire to retain the park’s natural character, and using signage, education, and some barriers (although not fences to the extent possible) to ensure wildlife is protected from harassment and displacement, and does not become a safety threat to park users.

Dog Park – Although not everyone wants an off-leash dog park at University Lake, everyone agrees that there is growing demand for this use that needs to be considered on an area-wide basis. The vision of several advisory group members is that over the next 20 years a network of “close to home” dog parks, with soft-tread trail systems and water play opportunities, develops across Anchorage. This would effectively disperse off-leash dog activities across town, putting less pressure on University Lake Park. At the same time, within the park there is interest in off-leash dog related problem solving and better outreach, which could potentially include: designating dog area restrictions, installing short “dog deterrence” features that block dogs from running into multi-use trail, work parties, dog-owner training (especially for first time park users), more garbage cans around the lake to encourage waste pick up, and a campaign for P/U others’ dog waste “1 for me/ 1 for u.”

University Lake Park Master Plan

Advisory Group #2 Meeting Summary

11:30 am - 1:00 pm Wednesday, October 29, 2015 ANTHC

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is developing a master plan for University Lake Park. The master plan will provide a framework for future management and development of facilities over the next 20 years. The following is a summary of second Advisory Group meeting.

Attendees:

Advisory Group Members:

Kayla Epstein, Anchorage Unleashed
Ben Hahn, APU
Jeff Urbanus, MOA Watershed Mgmt.
Steve Zemke, UACC
Mark Fitch, Bike Commuter
Lonnie Mansell, UAA
Bob Shipley, Anchorage Waterways Council
Michelle Weston, ANTHC
Kimberly Olmsted, Park Neighbor
Jim Sipman, Friends of University Lake
Hannah Davis, UACC
Chris Turletes (Alternate), UAA

Planning Team:

Steve Rafuse, MOA Parks and Recreation
Matt McMillan, Stantec
Sara Wilson Doyle, Stantec
Dwayne Adams, Earthscape

Presentation

Steve Rafuse began the meeting with introductions and a quick review of the planning process and progress to date. Sara Wilson Doyle then provided a review of public input gathered from the second public meeting. During the public meeting, members of the public were asked to state their preference for management and design solutions aimed at addressing issues identified earlier in the planning process. Sara reviewed the general consensus items and then provided a review of the responses to questions that were provided by the public at the meeting.

Discussion

Following the presentation, Dwayne Adams presented a schematic plan to the Advisory Group. The schematic plan provided a graphic representation including potential design solutions for issues where there was no clear direction from the public. The purpose of the schematic plan was to facilitate dialog and engage the advisory group in a discussion around potential management and design solutions. The following is a review of that discussion:

1. Location of Multi-Purpose Trail: The Advisory Group debated as to the location of the existing multi-purpose trail within the western portion of the park near the parking lot. It currently crosses between the parking area and the trail system and has been considered by many as being in the wrong place. Dwayne Adams showed a possible relocation of the trail down a utility easement that would connect to the existing trail along Elmore Street, south of the existing University Lake Park parking lot.

There was some strong opposition to this solution as it placed increasing numbers of bicycle riders and pedestrians in a contraflow hazard as it crosses the entrance to the parking lot. Those leaving the parking lot often look only left when turning onto the one-way lanes of Elmore Street. Thus, those riding or walking south may believe that drivers are aware of their presence, when in fact they are not watching for traffic coming from the right. This creates a safety hazard for those riders and walkers. There was no agreement within the Advisory Group as to whether this solution was a good idea. There was discussion that the hazard could be mitigated by moving the parking lot to the east, providing for a longer access, which would provide a crossing point that was removed from the intersection where drivers were trying to turn.

Dwayne agreed to develop alternatives to address both: a) keeping the existing configuration and trying to resolve the conflict of dogs crossing from the entry park to trails, with that of cyclists; and b) shifting of the parking lot to the east such that it provided a longer drive aisle.

Regarding the concept that Dwayne showed, it was brought up that the utilities in that corridor may be of issue as the sewer line may have a depth of burial that would preclude cut of the sloping hillside where the proposed alternative connection was located.

2. Parking: The Advisory Group discussed whether providing additional parking was appropriate. There was some thought that as other parks offer off-leash areas, there may be some dispersion of off-leash use within the general community, suggesting the possibility of less “drive-to” off-leash demand. There was also some feeling that if parking expansion were provided, it would simply induce more parking by non-park users from UAA or APU. Also, some group members felt that as parking was expanded at ANMC, new parking lots and parking garages could be used by park users during non-business hours, which is the period of peak parking demand for the park. The Advisory Group felt that any parking expansion within the park should wait until such time that there is a demonstrated need, as expressed by users or adjacent property owners

who are concerned about park use parking demand encroaching on their parking.

3. New ADA Accessible Trail: The Planning Team discussed with the Advisory Group, the possible need for a paved trail that would be fully accessible and maintainable even under winter conditions. This trail would pave a ¼ mile length of the existing trail in the southeastern-most portion of the park. The trail would be paved, respecting the relatively high proportion of non-ambulatory individuals who could use the park. This would recognize the park's proximity to two of the largest hospital complexes in the State of Alaska. However, the Advisory Group felt that such a paved trail would compromise the park setting and was inconsistent with the input from the public meeting.

4. Shoreline Access: The Advisory Group discussed how best to provide access to the shoreline while recognizing use patterns and protecting the natural qualities of the park. There was a general sense that shoreline protection is important but that the nature of humans and dogs would make it difficult to restrain access at many locations. Thus areas of intense use should have some protection via matting or other revegetation methods that would allow access while protecting the slope. Those areas of concern should include the existing heavily used access points in front of the hotel, the APU boat launch area, and the Chester Creek inlet at a minimum. Signage should be used to explain the need to protect other areas and fencing could be used if necessary at particularly sensitive slopes.

5. Chester Creek: The Advisory Group discussed whether improvement of Chester Creek should be part of the park plan. There was consensus that the reconstruction of the creek is probably better addressed through the prioritization of Chester Creek improvements citywide. The creek may need improvement but water quality is not truly jeopardized by the creek in its present condition, thus it should not be a priority for park improvement. However, a short discussion of the issue and need should be included in the master plan document.

6. Soft-Surface Trail Loop: Dwayne presented a concept that showed a loop that would provide an alternative narrow, soft pathway set in the woods, allowing a quieter, less-used alternative to the existing lake loop. The Advisory Group did not favor this approach and suggested that if such a thing is needed, it be based on demonstrated overuse of the lake loop, as determined through complaints as the park grows in use, over time. The alternative loop presently exists as an unimproved social trail and it can serve as an alternative in its current configuration.

7. Gateways and Nodes: The Advisory Group considered provision of gateways and nodes at key locations. The intent would be to direct pedestrian traffic to specific crossing/entry points to better allow cyclists to know where to expect people crossing, and to provide better park organization and wayfinding. The Advisory Group agreed with this approach after discussion.

8. Off-leash Status: The Advisory Group discussed whether there should be any restrictions to the existing off-leash use areas through either area designations, or via management policies such as on/off days. The Advisory Group agreed that the existing designated areas and use are appropriate as configured and as managed.

9. Open Space: The Advisory Group agreed that the green space that exists on the north side of the lake (immediately south of University Lake Drive) was a necessary part of the park and should be retained. They also agreed that there should be a fence to separate the roadway from the park. Also, the Advisory Group agreed that the Municipality of Anchorage consider purchase or land exchange to incorporate the APU open area north of the park, into the park.

10. University Lake Drive: Concern was expressed for current University Lake Drive plans (by DOWL) to provide collection of street runoff directly to a single discharge point in University Lake. The Advisory Group agreed that the MOA Parks and Recreation Department should pursue discussions with ADOT&PF for incorporation of “green infrastructure” into the road design plans. That should also be incorporated into the University Lake Park Master Plan in order to provide some teeth to that issue at such time that review bodies consider plans for the roadway.

University Lake Park Master Plan

Advisory Group #3 Meeting Summary

11:30 am - 1:00 pm Wednesday, November 18, 2015 ANTHC

Anchorage Parks and Recreation is developing a master plan for University Lake Park. The master plan will provide a framework for future management and development of facilities over the next 20 years. The following is a summary of the third Advisory Group meeting.

Attendees:

Advisory Group Members:

Kayla Epstein, Anchorage Unleashed
Ben Hahn, APU
Steve Zemke, UACC
Mark Fitch, Bike Commuter
Lonnie Mansell, UAA
Kimberly Olmsted, Park Neighbor
Jim Sipman, Friends of University Lake
Ryan Toohey, Park Neighbor, USGS employee
Tamara Zeller, USFWS, Migratory Birds
Marilyn Houser, AWC

Planning Team:

Steve Rafuse, MOA Parks and Recreation
Matt McMillan, Stantec
Sara Wilson Doyle, Stantec
Dwayne Adams, Earthscape

Presentation

Steve Rafuse and Dwayne Adams began the meeting with introductions and a quick review of the planning process and the consensus items reached during previous Advisory Group and Public Meetings.

Discussion

Dwayne Adams began the discussion by outlining the 9 unresolved issues with the master plan as he presented graphics and ideas associated with the following issues.

1. Parking lot location and trail location:

The Advisory Group discussed the proposed location of the parking lot to the east, further separated from Elmore Road and a new location for the multi-use trail that avoids existing conflicts between dogs and cyclists. By moving the parking lot further to the east it reduces the potential for conflict between cars exiting and entering the parking lot and cyclists or

pedestrians traveling north and south on the multi-use trail. Consensus was reached with this plan after discussing the improvement of this plan versus other previous alignments of the multi-use trail that would have increased the possibility of car-cyclist conflict. Other discussion surrounded the location of the electrical and sewer easements that would need to be avoided. The need for access to the electrical boxes next to the proposed realignment of the multi-use trail would create a situation where maintenance trucks would be parked partly on or next to the trail. The minimal expected conflict from trucks parking on the path was discussed and the Advisory Group agreed that it was acceptable. Routing the trail over sewer easements would not create any additional problems according to Dwayne's conversation with AWWU and the Advisory Group agreed this alignment would suit future needs.

2. Parking Lot Expansion:

The Advisory Group discussed the plan presented by Dwayne to expand the parking lot only upon demonstrated need up to and not exceeding 50 parking spaces. Discussion surrounded the implementation of time limits, enforcement, and existing signage in the lot that has indicated time-limited parking. The ability of the Municipality of Anchorage to enforce time limits through ticketing was discussed but the Advisory Group agreed the implementation of time limits and enforcement would be difficult and that the majority of users are only using the parking space for 1-2 hours. Also discussed was the reduction in parking on the north side of the lake where the extension of University Lake Drive will be located. This will create added pressure to the existing parking lot and monitoring of demand exceeding supply will need to be monitored.

3. Trail removals and surface treatments:

The Advisory Group discussed the revegetation of trails near the creek outlet north of the parking lot, removal of asphalt in this area to signify off-leash dog area, and the idea that social trails will be utilized no matter how much management or design tries to avoid them. Any revegetation will need to be vigorous and identified with signage and fencing for a long period of time to avoid trampling, successful restoration, and alteration of user habits. Users are creatures of habit and will try to maintain access through the areas north and south of the creek outfall.

4. Water access points:

The planning team presented the idea of enhancing 3 water access points with identification, and hardening to reduce erosion of high use water access. The three locations presented were the sloped area next to the hotel, the creek inflow into the lake, and the terraced hill on the north east side of the lake that is currently used in the summer for boat access by campers. This location might not be ideal since it is steep and enhanced use may increase the potential for erosion. One idea proposed was to harden the area for water access on the north side of the lake near the beginning of the proposed extension of University Lake Drive.

5. Mid Lake trail access

Discussion by the Advisory Group largely surrounded the land on the north and south sides of the lake where it constricts and an island is located, beaver dens are located, and grebes nest in the summer. This is one of the most highly used water access points in the lake but also the most highly used areas for wildlife. To avoid bird-dog and beaver-dog conflicts, it was suggested by the Advisory Group that fencing and aggressive revegetation of the peninsula (old ADF&G boat ramp) on the north side of the lake will be the only way to change user behavior in this area. General consensus was reached regarding protection of nesting migratory birds in this area and restricting the access by dogs. Additionally, it was mentioned that the Muni website for University Lake Park says that dogs are prohibited from swimming in the lake. This is not confirmed in the code designating University Lake Park an off-leash dog park and it would be near impossible to enforce if it were the case. The Advisory Group also discussed the installation of interpretive information on the north and south sides of the Mid-Lake area since the prevalence of wildlife in this location is highest and the highlighting importance of migratory birds at this location is ideal. Another idea proposed by the Advisory Group was to create fencing or physical barrier such as chicane fencing at the trail intersections and make the southern peninsula on-leash only. The installation of a physical barrier will help identify the difference in on-leash and off-leash areas with the support of signage as well as help reduce the flow of users to an area very important for wildlife.

6. APU Gateway/Access:

A Gateway is proposed by the planning team at the north side of the park at the boundary between the Alaska Pacific University (APU) property and the Park property. APU is open to negotiating access at the north side of the park since this land is endowment land that will be used for future development and the proximity to the lake enhances the value of this property.

7. Chester Creek Social Trail:

Next the Advisory Group discussed the social trails in the park and accepting these trails as part of the park trail system. One member highlighted the importance of the social trail the begins at the south east part of the park and winds through APU land between the ski trails finding its way to the Chester Creek Trail near Goose Lake Park. This trail is primarily used in the winter for fat biking since sections of it are inundated with water in the summer as it travels through wetlands once on the north side of the APU and UAA properties.

8. Secondary trails:

The Advisory Group discussed additional secondary trails and whether or not to provide improvements or leave them as social trails. The Group decided to leave them as social trails but recognized that these trails will see increased use and may need more management and improvements in the future.

9. Gateway/Node:

As the last item, the Advisory Group discussed the aesthetics, functionality, and wayfinding at Gateways and Nodes. The planning team presented graphics of the general aesthetic and locations of information kiosks, interpretive signs, location maps and the locations of Gateways and Nodes. The Advisory Group generally agreed that the Gateways and Nodes needed a strong presence but maintain the park aesthetic as a natural area. Gateways should all have wayfinding, information, refuse bins, mutt-mitts, seating and maintain the park aesthetic. Chicane fencing at trail intersections along the multi-use trail was discussed as a good idea so as to localize entrance and exits to the park and reduce user conflicts at these intersections. At the Nodes, wayfinding was discussed and locations were agreed upon from the plan schematic presented to the Advisory Group. Triangular Gateway signage was discussed as the best solution since it reduces the opportunity of graffiti. Precise locations of the wayfinding and kiosks were discussed as well due to the representation in the graphics, but future locating of these features will need to be addressed in the design details as construction documents are developed.

Appendix D: Public Meeting Input

The planning team hosted two meetings open to the general public. Both meetings were well attended with approximately 100 people attending the first meeting and 40-50 attending the second meeting. The goal of the first meeting was to introduce the project and to provide opportunities for the members of the public to provide input. The second meeting focused on soliciting feedback to determine preferences for various design and management solutions to issues identified early in the planning process. The following pages provide a summary of comments and input from the public meetings.

Public Meeting #1

The following pages consist of comments recorded and transcribed at public meeting #1. Comments are categorized by topic or theme.

Access and Connections	
Limit	Accommodate
Limit Development and parking	Needs more parking
Consider parking relative to how crowded it already is—don't encourage more	Free parking to park users, not to UAA/APU students
Bikes use endangers dogs and people.	More parking
Use paved trails for bikes, not park	Need bike racks
Speed limits for those on paved trail.	Need more parking
Univ. Lk. Rd. funding is not supposed to be used to meet needs of one landowner	Keep bike travel through park
No parking expansion	More and better parking
Open area north (near planned road) serves multiple purposes and is only open space at park	Dog proof fence between Lake Road extension and dog park
No parking on north side where field is—only open space	More parking
Bicyclists stay on paved trails and off soft trails	Better parking
Bicyclists need to be told to slow down.	Add parking
	Add parking where existing 22 car lot is
	Maybe more parking
	Add parking spaces-use part of field near hotel
	Create added parking in aesthetic manner
	Parking needed.
	Peds need to be aware of bikes and vice versa
	Fence needed to separate Univ. Lk. Road from park
	Need more parking
	Coordinate with ANTHC to make sure we recognize their future parking expansions
	Need more parking on west side
	Need parking agreements with area landowners for weekends
	Re-route bike trail near Elmore—hill has poor visibility
	Need more parking in a non-disruptive way
	Sign to tell people where to report beaver attacks on dogs
	Increase parking
	Should make the parking along Univ. Lk. Road curb 2hr parking near the Spine Clinic
	Intersection of bike trail and parking area is always clogged

Management and Maintenance

Actions

Relocate beavers, mesh on trees	Dog hurt safety, parking needs, damage vegetation, hurt water quality, endanger wildlife, and reduce public enjoyment
Provide regular mntc./cleanup	Need more education—this is a park with multiple users-not just dog walkers
Relocated beavers/mesh on trees	Park is overused
Wood chips on muddy trails	Keep multi-use aspect—good model
Poop fines-\$75 w/ volunteer enforcers	Manage for people and animals
Leash fines	Provide well-maintained trails.
Beavers populating too fast	Maintain trails
Enforce parking @ APU, dog poop cleanup, unleashed dogs	Signs about ice
Signage at multiuse trail to leash dogs	Bicycles on Multi-Use trail should yield to peds.
Sign APU field to say “not park”	Tree fence too tight=trees grow. Adjust over years
Increase awareness of other dog parks in East Anch.	Establish parking pass system like State Parks has
Wayfinding confusing	Bench on north side of paved trails induces ped traffic from ANMC to cross paved trail to sit down and causes conflict
Deal w/ cigarette butts	No antifreeze or oil changes in parking lots
More tree protection	Educate people to be courteous and to clean up after themselves
Post emergency numbers	Educate people to not walk or take dogs on groomed ski trails
Courtesy information “Being a neighbor means...” “multi-use means...”	Leashed dogs on paved trails need to be aware of bikes
Beaver control	Be respectful of APU lands and ski trails
Smoking is an issue	Need brochure or map showing where other dog parks are
Create rules and actions to maintain off-leash status	Re-stock dog bags more often
Manage with a 10-20-50 year vision	Post MOA enforcement number on a kiosk or sign
Advertise off leash areas	Post signs to tell cyclists to use bells to warn dogs and owners of their presence
No space for homeless	Establish a reporting system through vets for reporting beaver attacks on dogs
Empty the garbage cans more often	Move smoking bench to ANMC campus
Empty trash cans more often	Need better clearing of homeless camps.
No smoking	Designate lanes on multi-use trail for different uses—XCo ski, skating/ Bikes/Dog walkers & ski jorers.

Natural Setting

Preservation	Facility Improvements
Vegetation, quiet, dirt trails	Signs warning of dog slime (dogs will be dogs)
Quiet, natural, clean-respect wildlife	Clear an area for open space to socialize dogs
Keep wild and natural	signage
Don't develop the last frontier!	port-a-potties
Protect the natural trails.	Add trash cans
No extra development.	Port a potties
Keep this a natural place in the city	Informational signage
Keep paths natural. Do not destroy like playground-impacted Westchester Lagoon.	Benches
Keep as much natural as possible. We are already losing too much wild land.	Warning signs on multi-use trail and parking lot to dog park
The wild animals need space as much as the humans and dogs.	Signs warning bikers and walkers @ off leash designation
Don't develop the last frontier	Interpretive signs, benches
Hint of the Great Land	More side trails
Park became too busy after 2003-character changed	More fencing too please complainers
Keep woods wild to allow exploration and play	Out house
Keep it rustic (multi-checks)	Maybe pave off leash area to reduce mud but not if it ices up
	Needs signage
	Upgrade trails around lake—widen and provide good compacted surface.
	Provide informational signage-esp. @ intersections
	Signage to denote approp. Behavior/speed and dog control
	Trash cans
	Better maintain trails
	Improve signage
	Bear-proof trash cans
	Signage improvements to protect water quality
	Port a potties
	Café
	Bike Racks
	Open field for ball throwing
	Soft surface trails for off-leash areas
	gravel trails, not more paved trails
	more trash cans
	benches need near hotel
	outhouse
	trails should use rounded gravel, not sharp-edged (hurts dogs feet)
	need bike racks at entries
	There are muddy sections in southwest portion of lake loop that get muddy
	Use rounded gravel not sharp on trails
	Trail at southwest is rough ad uneven-people use multi-purpose trail instead
	Field at north (Univ. Lk. Road) needs to be improved to encourage more use
	Maybe close ½ of field at time (near U-Lake Rd.) to allow grass growth
	Need trash can at north field.
	Need signage at beaver peninsula to reduce dog/beaver conflicts.
	Signage to leash dogs at multi-use trail
	Better signage to inform non-dog users that they are entering an off-leash area and should expect chaos
	Sign needed: "This is a lawful off-leash dog park. I you/your children do not feel comfortable around being approached by dogs, please go elsewhere.
	Make a walking trail along lake that prohibits bikes.
	Clear a new field where we can gather and throw balls for dogs.

Area Growth and Context

Actions

Collaborate with APU to create green communal space

Expand area to prevent heavy foot traffic

Purchase APU soccer field

Ar

Need more parks like this in other areas

Land exchange w/ APU for “central park” for dog park, skiers, etc.

Add other dog parks, especially if Univ. Lk. Is closed to dogs

Land swap w/ APU for field

Property owned by School and Muni are 2 separate issues-Don't allow Muni to build at this site—it is too small

Improve other dog park areas-e.g. Connor's Bog

Buy field from APU

Signage and education to keep people off APU lands—dogs and walkers damage ski trails

Continuation of this park as a dog park is detrimental to the long term growth of APU and ANMC.

Need to encourage people to use Russian Jack off leash area more w/ signage there to keep people off ski trails

Not all things to all people

More community dog trails like this one so this one doesn't get overcrowded.

We need more off-leash dog parks

Thanks for off-leash dog parks

Buy the soccer field @ APU

Anchorage needs more dog parks to take pressure off this one

This is only 1.1 miles of trail committed to off leash of the hundreds of miles of trails in Anch.

Need to engage APU in land exchange for open field.

Provide improvement of neighborhood connections (off park land)

Need more off-leash dog parks

Maintain green space @ APU—limit their development of that area and the road

Provide better access to other dog parks to take pressure off this one

Create more dog parks in Anchorage

Create more dog parks in Anch to remove pressure from this one.

Need a place in East Anchorage for disabled and able-bodied to exercise dogs

Water Quality & Wildlife

Actions

Plant more trees, mesh around trunk

Re-route creek w/ meanders to help floods/erosion and stop delta formation

Inc. habitat for salmon ducks

Move beavers

Dogs are damaging the environment

Lower trail gradient at inlet to reduce erosion. Fence lakeshore edge. Provide formal access to lake on each side of lake—walkway or steps

Protect wildlife.

Protect from erosion

Fish hooks are dangerous. Fish somewhere else.

Don't stock with salmon—brings bears. Salmon are everywhere else. Go there

Beavers are cool.

Focused restoration

Tree protection to maintain bank stability

Restore stream meanders

Possible flood mitigation

Create salmon habitat

Gradient/stepping of creek

Stream bank restoration

Lower trail grade near creek inlet to reduce erosion

Leave as many trees as possible-great birding

Mesh more trees to prevent destruction.

Encourage beavers to go somewhere else and not repopulate

Replace downed trees with trees that are less desirable to beavers

Mesh more trees now!

Remove the beavers

There is erosion at the western bridge crossing

ANMC & ANTHC need to have smoking area to accommodate smokers some place other than park/trail

UMED-this is not their personal ash tray. "No Smoking per AMC ###)

Dogs

Maintain Dog Park	Limit Use
Prime purpose of park should be off-leash use	Delete dog park
Keep as off-leash dog park	Dog park was only supposed to be on one side of lake.
Preserve off-leash	We have reached a point where we need to reassess dogs in the park. Too congested, denuded and chaotic. Find a better location.
Keep off leash corridor around the lake	Non-paved trail near lake should be usable by those without dogs. Dogs do not mix with casual park users and those trying to exercise for health.
Keep it a dog park	Get rid of the dogs—too much conflict. If they stay, limit them to north side of park.
Leave it unleashed	Need to better control dogs—don't like them jumping on me.
Keep full circle of trails off leash	Control the dogs.
Keep trail full circle	Dogs on paved trail are dangerous
Always allow dogs on and off leash	Wrong place for off-leash dog park-dogs are on paved trail and are dangerous
Keep grass at the off leash dog park	Need to restrict dogs where revegetation takes place
Off leash is essential for good health	Don't allow dogs to jump on people—otherwise they shouldn't be off-leash
Maintain off-leash at lake circuit	
Keep dog park w/ 1.1 mi. loop	
Place for both people and dogs to socialize	
Pro dog park	
Come here for off-leash dog walks	
Sign: "This is a lawful off-leash dog park. If you are not comfortable around dogs, please go to another park.	
Do not get rid of this dog park	
12 year old dog acts like a puppy here	
Keep off-leash dog friendly	
Maintain complete circuit for off leash dog walks	
Off leash serves a good purpose for dogs and people	
Thanks for the off-leash parks	
Sign @ U-Med entry should tell people to go to different park if they don't like off-leash dogs	
Close to work and provides my dog and me a place to walk during the day	
Don't reduce the space that dogs have for off-leash	

Public Meeting #2

The following pages reflect input provided at the second public meeting. During this meeting, members of the public were given an interactive handout in which they were asked to provide answers to various management and design approaches intended to resolve issues at University Lake Park. Responses were tallied and are provided in red next to each question.

Input to Date

University Lake Park Master Plan

10/19/15

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

General Agreement

Participants broadly agreed on a number of issues regarding the future of University Lake Park. All valued the natural setting and the trails for quiet recreation. There was also wholesale agreement regarding a number of the qualities that make University Lake a community gem, and challenges that we face in the future:

- **University Lake Park is a valued natural area/ green space in a rapidly urbanizing area**
- **The park is being "loved to death"**
- **University Lake will face increased desirability by numbers of different users**
- **The numerous different recreation interests often experience conflicts**
- **Signage, boundaries, and wayfinding are unclear and need to be improved**
- **Most park users are responsible, although not all**
- **Water quality and habitat restoration need to be addressed**
- **Parking does not meet current demand and needs to be addressed**



Tonight's Input Format

University Lake Park Master Plan

10/19/15

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

Tonight's goal is to explore possible directions the Municipality could take in the Master Plan

Interactive Handout/Presentation Format

To go along with our presentation, the planning team has created an interactive "menu" for your review and input in two specific areas where MOA can realistically plan for the future:

Management Approaches

Design Approaches

We do not expect agreement, but rather are looking for nuanced compromises and acceptable approaches that can be developed further into a draft master plan.

YOUR DIRECTIONS FOR TONIGHT:

Please Check **one** or **two** preferred approaches to each of the questions in the handout that follows:

EXAMPLE

- Option 1 (I hate this)
- Option 2 (I love this)
- Option 3 (blah!)
- Option 4 (I can live with this)
- Option 5 (blah! blah! blah!)

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

No Clear Consensus

There are many other areas for which there was no clear consensus. The planning team has identified these within five broad topic areas that need to be addressed in the University Lake Master Plan. This includes:



1) Natural Setting



2) Water Quality



3) Trail Use



4) Access, Nodes, and Connections



5) User Amenities

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

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10/19/15



1) Natural Setting

There is a desire to retain University Lake Park's natural and rustic characteristics, even as the surrounding UMED district develops and park use grows. However, increasing park use, without restrictions or additional management, damages park resources and threatens public uses within the park. Additionally, there is a desire for open play areas for dogs and people. How do we accommodate this while not destroying "natural values?"

Beavers

Beavers are taking more and more trees and are defending their territory. Biologists tell us that relocating or killing them doesn't solve the problem—the habitat is perfect for beavers and more will simply move in. How should we handle them?

- 2 Option 1) Remove them and "beaver-proof" the lake by removing the trees they use for food and housing.
- 5 Option 2) Remove them and place metal or fencing on trees they use for food or housing.
- 18 Option 3) Don't remove them but put metal or fencing on trees they use for food or housing.
- 15 Option 4) Don't do anything—they belong here.



Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

Presence of Humans

Many people believe the park is being "loved to death". They value the natural place and the ability to "get out in the forest" at a place near where they live, work, or walk their dog. Are there too many people? Should we take actions to manage the presence of people?



- 7 Option 1) Get rid of all parking and make it a "walk-in" park.
- 12 Option 2) Provide more trails to spread people out.
- 19 Option 3) It's fine as it is and if it increases in use, so be it.
- 14 Option 4) Recognize the growing use and provide accommodations to address it.

Presence of Dogs

The parks use as an off-leash dog space is one thing that is most attractive about the park to many people. Others believe that unleashed activity is destroying the park. Do you think we should:



- 15 Option 1) Provide additional off-leash trails to better spread the use.
- 19 Option 2) Maintain "as is" with existing off-leash loop.
- 5 Option 3) Provide one loop within the park that is an "off-leash trail" and make all other loops "on leash". This could entail a bridge or walkway through the middle of the lake.
- 4 Option 4) Provide some management restrictions such as "on leash days" and "off leash days".
- 4 Option 5) Allow "off leash" use as a provisional use until such time that a suitable alternative location can be found, then designate University Lake Park as "on leash" only.
- 5 Option 6) Remove "off leash" use from the park.

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

Open Space

Open space is an important part of most parks and may be important to uses within University Lake Park as well. Many people feel the existing small area north of the lake is ideal for dog "open play" and training. Some have also suggested purchasing land from APU that is often used for park purposes but is actually off park land. How do we meet needs for open space?

- 19 Option 1) Keep the area north of the lake and provide improvements to it such as good lawn and signage.
- 9 Option 2) Revegetate existing area north of the lake. Open space is not an asset to this park
- 7 Option 3) Find a place within the existing forest to establish a new open space.
- 14 Option 4) Explore the option of purchasing APU open space, or entering into a land trade.



Current "open space," north of the lake.



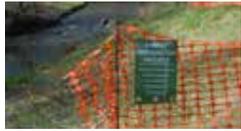
APU land adjacent to the park.

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15



2) Water Quality

Water quality of University Lake receives fecal coliform, experiences erosion of banks into the lake, and accumulates deposits of silt and sand from Chester Creek. Some people fear for the health of themselves and their dogs and are concerned about contact with the water. Also, these occurrences are changing the character of the lake. Beyond addressing upstream pollution contributors, we still need to address water quality concerns.

Access to Shoreline

Being able to touch the water and allow dogs to get to the water is important to users and dog-walkers in particular. Also kids love water and want to be in it and near it and to see the critters that live there. But it also can be bad for water quality if we degrade vegetation. Should we:

- 13 Option 1) Keep it as it is with some revegetation of the shoreline. University Lake was a gravel pit and is still better than it was.
- 11 Option 2) Restrict access to the lake at certain places where erosion is bad, or slopes are too steep, and revegetate those areas.
- 12 Option 3) Designate 3-4 places where lake access is acceptable and prohibit access at other locations. Revegetate damaged areas.
- 5 Option 4) Revegetate the shoreline, provide appropriate signage and fencing, and allow water access at only one place.



Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

The Appearance of the Shoreline

University Lake Park is for the most part a "natural area", it is proximate to a major employment center that is rapidly urbanizing. Further, the park is experiencing increasing numbers of users who go to the lake to simply walk and enjoy the views. Many communities have seen this transition and have urbanized the water edge to minimize the impact of people. In Seattle, Green Lake has experienced this change. In Midtown Anchorage, Cuddy Family Park offers an urban shoreline at one designated location. Is this appropriate for parts of University Lake Park?

- 11 Option 1) No, leave the edge alone now and into the foreseeable future.
- 11 Option 2) Leave "as is" but discourage contact by users at key locations to prevent erosion.
- 15 Option 3) Focus access where use is most intensive, maybe on the north edge where the existing open area is next to UAA/APU. Provide a low ramp so dogs can access the water at the north edge where access frequently occurs. Discourage access in other areas.
- 5 Option 4) Provide a nice urban plaza near the hotel and the open area on the north side, similar to Cuddy Family Park to protect the area where people congregate and where UAA/APU are located. This becomes the one and only public urban space.



Anchorage, Cuddy Family Park.

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

Chester Creek

Chester Creek underwent significant changes over the years and now is a channel that flows west from the park's southeastern corner, where it does a zig zag to its entry to the lake. It provides little habitat for fish and has created a delta because the silts and sands are carried undisturbed until the creek reaches the quiet waters of the lake. Instead of being a park attribute, it is largely ignored and in fact compromises water quality in University Lake due to its sediment load. What should we do?



- 14 Option 1) Nothing, we have other things to do with our money and the delta provides good wading opportunities.
- 8 Option 2) We should restrict water contact at that location because access at that location has killed all the vegetation. Then we should revegetate the lake bank.
- 17 Option 3) We should re-build the creek to offer better habitat, capture sediment, and address flooding before Chester Creek enters University Lake

Waste Products in Lake

Wildlife and dogs increase fecal coliform contribution to the lake due to run off. "Scoop the Poop" helps but coliform levels are still higher than are desirable at the lake. What should we do to reduce waste products in the lake?



- 8 Option 1) Do nothing, it's not that bad in comparison to other places in Anchorage.
- 20 Option 2) Step up user education and outreach about the negative aspects of dog waste.
- 5 Option 3) Limit off-leash areas to those locations further away from the lake.
- 7 Option 4) Prohibit off-leash dog use.

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15



3) Trail Use

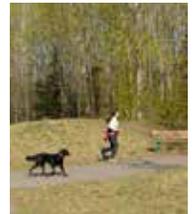
There is a mix of uses within the park and they sometimes create conflicts. Some people use the trails as a route to work or to do a larger recreational ride or training. Others see the trails as primarily providing dog walking opportunities. Still others see the trails as nature walks.



Through-park traffic

The existing paved trail on the eastern and southern sides receive high levels of use, much of which is traveling at relatively high speeds. That sometimes conflicts with other park use, not to mention that sometimes people coming from outside of the park can walk onto the trail without recognizing the fast moving traffic. How do we handle this?

- 10 Option 1) Provide additional width to the existing multi-use trail, providing a soft surface trail directly adjacent to the existing trail.
- 17 Option 2) Improve trail signage on the multi-use trail to inform skiers, runners, and bicyclist of the presence of pedestrians crossing the trail and to ask them to slow speeds.
- 13 Option 3) Provide fences or other design solutions so that off-leash users, on-leash users, and other pedestrians recognize presence of passing skiers, runners, and bicyclists.
- 6 Option 4) Prohibit or discourage bicycle use in off-leash areas to reduce high-speed conflicts.
- 3 Option 5) Don't do anything. Darwin knows that it will all sort itself out.



Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

Soft Surface Trails

There is a lot of land within the park and much of it is not used actively. As use continues there may be a need for more trails to meet demands. What option would you support?



- 3 Option 1) Provide a bridge at the middle of the lake so that you would have unique views and a shorter loop.
- 9 Option 2) Provide more loops 6-8 feet wide in the woods for more alternative places to walk
- 12 Option 3) Provide more narrow 3- to 4-foot wide "social trails" that would create a network of smaller trails within the park
- 10 Option 4) Don't do anything—it's fine as it is.

Surfacing

Appropriate trail surfacing that helps prevent destruction of adjacent forest is important to use. However, it can change the setting and appearance of the park. What is an appropriate level of improvement of trails?



- 11 Option 1) Provide minimal maintenance—just fix the wet spots and low spots that exist. Leave everything else alone.
- 22 Option 2) Upgrade the existing soft surface trails.
- 7 Option 3) Pave short sections near the parking lots but make them natural or gravel after 200 yards or so.
- 4 Option 4) Pave a main loop trail but the rest should be natural or gravel.

Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15



4) Access, Nodes and Connections

As University Lake Park has grown in popularity, increasing numbers of people want expanded parking lots, trail connections, and greater access from more places. How do we recognize this increasing demand while maintaining the settings that are important to park use?

Parking Options

Parking is one of the challenging issues. Parking is now provided off Bragaw Road and along the road north of the park. There is increasing demand for parking; however, parking is used by other than park users, and park users use parking that is not on parkland. Should we:

- 8 Option 1) Do nothing - no new parking.
- 19 Option 2) Add parking by extending the existing lot to the east and south.
- 7 Option 3) Provide parking on the northern edge where the open area is.
- 10 Option 4) Require parking passes or "metered" parking in the existing lot.



Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

Gathering Nodes

Successful parks provide places for neighbors to “meet and greet.” They provide gathering places with seating and amenities such as trash cans, signage, scoop the poop bags, kiosks with information about upcoming events (dog training, runs, community events...), and even art. Is this appropriate for University Lake Park?

- 16 Option 1) No. It's a natural area—leave it that way.
- 14 Option 2) Maybe some seating and small nodes at key trail intersections or viewpoints.
- 5 Option 3) Maybe one main gathering area.
- 2 Option 4) Develop one or more gathering areas in the park.



Management Approaches

University Lake Park Master Plan

Alternatives reflect input gathered at a Public Open House and Advisory Group meeting in September 2015.

10/19/15

Connections to Neighbors

While “good fences make good neighbors,” good connections to neighbors are good for everyone. Currently, the park does not really connect to neighbors except at a couple locations. Should we:

- Option 1) Discourage connections at some existing locations, such as: _____ 5
- Option 2) Do nothing. We don't need to encourage use beyond what will naturally take place. 5
- Option 3) Provide “gateways” to the park at each side so that access to the park is clearly identifiable 13
- Option 4) Provide signage within the park to direct people where different connections are available and improve pathways to these connections. 14
- Option 5) Provide design solutions to clearly denote changes in user areas (e.g. off leash vs. on leash) and ownership such as between the park and APU and ANMC. 12

User Amenities

Parks need appropriate infrastructure to address the characteristics of use. Which of the following are amenities that you'd like to see in University Lake Park?



CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

- a. Interpretive panels 13
- b. Mutt mitt stations 19
- c. Bike racks 9
- d. Information kiosks 13
- e. Benches 11
- f. Trash cans 26
- g. Picnic tables 5
- h. Port a Potties 13
- i. Rest Rooms w/ running water 4
- j. Lighting at parking areas 9
- k. Lighting at key nodes in the park 7
- l. A lighted loop 7
- m. Other (please describe):

Appendix E: Resolutions

UNIVERSITY AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL (UACC)

RESOLUTION 2016-03

A Resolution of the UACC Pertaining to Off Leash Dogs and the MOA University Lake Park Master Plan

WHEREAS the Anchorage Municipal Charter Art. VIII, Sec 8.01 establishes Community Councils as representatives for neighborhoods in planning and development; **and**

WHEREAS the Anchorage Municipal Code Chap 25.10.080 B establishes MOA Parks; **and**

WHEREAS Community Councils are intended to reflect actual neighborhoods and provide guidance advice on management of Park-lands within their boundaries; **and**

WHEREAS the UACC members reflect a diverse set of users and opinions on the best use of the University Lake Park (ULP). There are some UACC members who feel that full time off lease dog use of the trail circling the University Lake prevents them from being able to use the Park. There are also some members that feel there are few other areas to legally allow off leash dog use; **and**

WHEREAS the UACC is in general agreement, given the diametrically opposed views of appropriate use of the ULP, that the *DRAFT* University Lake Park Master Plan (ULPMP) adequately reflects the needs of a diverse community of users, currently and those into the future, who use the Park; **and**

WHEREAS the use patterns within the ULP needs to be monitored to determine whether continued off leash dog use negatively impacts the environmental health of the ULP, and the health and safety of other recreational users of the ULP; **and**

WHEREAS the MOA Parks and Recreation Division and the MOA Animal Care and Control Center (AACCC) need to adequately enforce the regulations regarding on/off leash dog areas to protect the health and safety of all use groups within and adjacent to the ULP; **and**

WHEREAS the MOA may need to amend Title 17 if continued off leash dog trail use impacts the environmental health of the ULP, and/or creates a safety concern from negative and unsafe dog/people interactions, and unsanitary conditions related to failure to control dog fecal waste deposition; **and**

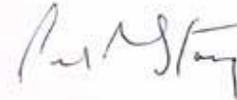
WHEREAS the MOA Parks and Recreation needs to create a safe situation within the ULP and provide adequate warning signs about safety concerns regarding unleashed dogs as to protect the health on people recreating within the ULP; **and**

WHEREAS the MOA needs to provide adequate funding for ULP signage, positive dog control structures, and integrative education infrastructure needed to meet the goals and objectives set for the park.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the UACC supports the ULPMP with adherence to the above mentioned standards and guidelines designed to ease the conflict between the diverse set of use groups using the ULP.

Resolution Vote: For 12 Against: 4 Abstain: 2

This resolution was **approved** by the UACC on this 6th day of April, 2016.



Paul Stang, UACC President



